THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

h 3

# TRUE TO THE LAST;

OR

# ALONE ON A WIDE WIDE SEA.

BY A. S. ROE,

AUTHOR OF "I'VE BEEN THINKING," "TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED," "A LONG LOOK AHEAD," "THE STAR AND THE CLOUD," ETC.

NEW YORK:
DERBY & JACKSON, 119 NASSAU STREET.
1858.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by

DERBY & JACKSON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

W. H. TINSON, Stereotyper,
Rear of 43 & 45 Centre St., N. Y.

GEORGE RUSSELL & Co., Printers,
61 Beekman St., N. Y.

PS
2724
R42tr

# TRUE TO THE LAST;

OR,

# ALONE ON A WIDE, WIDE SEA.

## CHAPTER I.

"Oh, mother dear! Do let Louise and me get into that boat—please do mother!

"What if it should get loose? You girls would be finely fixed! But you may jump into it if you wish."

And the two sprightly young creatures sprang, as soon as the permit was given, and running to the edge of the water, in a moment more were tumbling over the sides, and towards the stern of the boat, and there seating themselves on the rough board which answered for a seat, began very industriously to rock the little craft from side to side, and were in high glee at witnessing the commotion which they were enabled to make in the waters of the creek.

The boat had not been fastened, and only retained its position by resting its bow upon the sand—the owner, doubtless, considering it perfectly secure for some time at least, as the tide was just commencing to run out, and every moment would be giving it a stronger hold upon "terra firma."

The creek, as we have called the stream of water, was one of those little openings in the salt marsh, by which a mill-race found access to an inlet from the Sound. It was not very wide, being, where the boat lay, only a few rods across, but it gradually enlarged, until towards its mouth it obtained



1608890

quite a breadth, and on each side, commencing near where the little party were standing; there was spread out a large extent of marsh.

A lady and two girls, the latter somewhere between twelve and fourteen years of age, had been roaming among the rocks and cedars which abounded in that vicinity, and had extended their walk to the very border of the marsh, and perhaps intended to take a view of a little old mill, and its adjoining dwelling-house, whose roofs could be seen just peeping out from their snug nest between the hills, through which ran the stream above alluded to; when the boat, attracting the notice of the girls, they made the request with which our chapter begins.

The lady did not probably notice that the boat had nothing to secure it to the shore but its own weight, or she would not have felt so easy while the children were thus enjoying themselves upon an element to which they were not accustomed—nor did she notice that the boat, with its precious freight was each moment losing its hold upon the land—until she heard a loud call from each of them.

"Oh, mother! Oh, aunt! what shall we do?"

In haste, the lady rushed to their rescue, but the boat, excited by the previous motion, had floated too far for her hand to reach it.

"An oar, girls, quick! reach me an oar!"

The oars lay in the bottom of the boat, and it took some little time before one could be released from its position, and when put over the side, and towards the shore, fell far short of the hand that was extended to meet it; and as it plashed into the water, a loud laugh from the girls showed, that to them, at least, it was a fine frolic. The lady, however, did not feel quite at rest, although she had the good sense not to manifest much uneasiness, and said in a calm, pleasant tone of voice:

"You must row yourselves ashore now—I cannot help you."

And then, apparently, in a careless manner, she looked around, as though surveying the prospect, but in reality to ascertain if any one was in sight to whom she might apply for assistance—without it she could see no possible way by which the boat and its passengers could be regained, for their

efforts with the oars only added to the power of the tide, which was slowly but steadily bearing them beyond reach.

Not content with looking for help, she at once, with moderate pace, walked up the rising ground in the direction of the mill, and to her great joy espied the miller himself, or one whom she took for him, walking leisurely towards her, or more properly towards the spot where the boat had lain.

As he approached, he raised his hat and made a polite obeisance, without speaking. He was a large man—that is, he was well filled out, and looked the very picture of what a miller ought to be—a sample of good living, and with a clear, or at least, an easy conscience. He had no coat on, and when he removed his hat, out of respect for the lady, he kept it in his hand—no doubt for the benefit of what little air might be stirring.

"What—what, what! The boat is off, ha!"

"I fear, sir, my children have put you to inconvenience, if that boat is yours. It was very thoughtless in me to allow them to get into it, but it was lying apparently very secure upon the shore, and it was such a novelty to them to be in a boat, at their entreaty I permitted them to take a seat in it, not dreaming that there was a possibility of its floating off."

"It is of no consequence at all, madam, so far as I am concerned, but I am thinking how we are to get at them," and then raising his voice to a high pitch, "Children—children, —paddle the other way, you are rowing yourselves down stream!"

The girls heard and understood his meaning, and endeavored to obey instructions, but perfectly unused to oars, they merely managed to turn the prow towards the shore, and being near the bank opposite to that from which they had started, ran her into the mud.

"There!" said the lady, "they have got to the shore; but how shall we get at them?"

"They can hardly be said to have got to the shore, madam; they have got into the mud, and as to getting at *them*, or they getting to *us* from that part of the marsh, it is an *unpossible* thing! nothing but a frog or a mud turtle can keep on the top of such a quagmire, and the fact is, our side of the creek ain't much better. I should no more dare to ven-

ture, with my weight of body, on it, than I would try to walk across the creek; I might, may be, in that case, help myself a little with my hands, but the marsh would be a dead set—I should have to stay where I stuck.

In the meantime the girls, as though conscious that no landing could be effected there, put an oar out into the mud and began pushing off. The boat readily yielded to their united force, but the oar had gone too far into the soft substance to be easily removed, and in a moment more it was left sticking where it had been placed. The girls still unalarmed, and thoughtless of consequences, shouted again with merriment, and commenced paddling with the other oar, which only caused the boat to perform various evolutions, but without much retarding its progress towards the mouth of the creek.

The old miller now began to manifest great uneasiness; he had thrown his hat down, and kept walking about and wiping his forehead, and muttering to himself, and would no doubt have run off somewhere and called for help; but running was a thing not to be thought of in his condition of body, and no one was in sight to whom he could apply.

"What shall be done, sir! I begin to feel very uneasy; they will most certainly be carried beyond all reach; can I not go through the marsh?"

"Mercy on your soul! why, madam, it is utterly *unpossible;* the heavens and the earth! I don't know what to do, nor where to go; oh, dear! oh, dear! stop your paddling—put up the oar!"

He called out now at the very extent of his voice. The girls heard, and very soon the boat ceased its gyrations, and very quietly glided along further and further into the wider waters, and would very soon be in the outer inlet, and in a very exposed situation, and no boat of any kind was in sight. To crown all, the clouds were gathering for a storm, and the mutterings of distant thunder had more than once been heard. The lady now resolved to go herself in quest of aid, and was just starting towards the road which led by the mill, determined to proceed to the adjoining town, if assistance could not be procured short of that. It was indeed a fearful moment, and although she appeared to have much presence of mind and good courage, yet her pallid countenance betrayed

the terrible anxiety she suffered. Just at that moment a boy came running from a direction opposite to the mill, and from the very field of cedars in which the little party had been enjoying themselves. He had been running, doubtless, for some distance, for he looked quite heated, and was somewhat out of breath.

As soon as he reached the edge of the marsh he threw down his hat, off with his coat—a pretty blue round-about—pulled off his shoes and stockings, and rolled up his pantaloons.

"What are you going to do, Henry?" The miller had come up to him by the time he was performing the last operation, and so had the lady; for the moment she saw the boy she determined to apply to him, that he might run off and get help.

"They will be out in the wide water, Mr. Malcolm, if some one don't help them."

"Tell me what you are going to do, sir! you can't swim to them, and you shan't try it!" The old man spoke loud, for he was much excited.

"I shan't swim until I get nearer to them than I am now, Mr. Malcolm."

"Oh, won't you, my dear boy, just run as fast as you can; oh, I will handsomely reward you—do run and get some men to help us."

"There is no boat near, madam, if the men were here, and before I could get help they may be driven out into the Sound." And with that the little fellow stepped fearlessly into the marsh, and although sinking deep at every step, contrived to make progress towards the mouth of the creek.

"I don't know—oh dear! I am afraid I hadn't ought to have let him; what would his mother say if anything should happen to him? Oh dear, suz me! It's a dreadful unlucky thing all round."

"Is that your son, sir? Oh, I have been much to blame."

"It is not my son, madam; I ain't got chick nor child of my own—there, there! I'm afraid he's stuck—no, he's out again. He is a son of an old neighbor. His father is dead, and his mother, foolish woman—pardon me, madam, women do foolish things sometimes as well as men—but she's gone and married again, and is ill mated, as I take it. There, he's

clear down. Henry, come back!" The voice was loud enough, and the boy heard, for as he arose he raised his hand; but he had no idea of returning, and still floundered on his way.

"Oh, he is a brave boy, God grant no evil may happen to him."

"I say amen to that, madam."

"But how is he to get to the boat, my good sir? it is so far from the land."

"I don't know, madam, my head is dreadful dizzy. If they only knew enough to work that oar they might, maybe, crawl a little nearer to the shore. I don't know what he'll do without he swims to them, and I'm afraid he'll be clean tuckered out before he gets opposite to them. It's amazing hard work travelling through such a quagmire. And then if the wind should rise—well, we might as well be easy; they're all of them now beyond our help; we can't even holler to 'em—did you ever hear the like? How that thunder increases. It *does* seem to me lately that the showers don't take no time to get fixed; I was out in three of 'em yesterday, as fast as one was over the other was making ready."

"Has he not reached them? Is he not opposite to them, now, sir?"

"He is about opposite now, I should think, so far as I can see, madam—yes, there he goes, he's in—oh dear, it's life or death now for him. They are all children together, and if he should give out!"

It was indeed a moment of intense interest. They had seen his plunge into the water, but the distance and the intervening marsh prevented the sight of any other object besides the boat and the children in it, moving steadily on, and almost at the very entrance to the inlet. The clouds, too, were rapidly rising, the sun was hidden by the dense mass, the waters looked dark and forbidding, and the whole scenery around, lately so picturesque, in which the water and the land formed such a beautiful combination, was now stripped of its charms as though the pall of death had suddenly been let down upon it.

When Henry, for that was his name, and we may as well call him by it, had reached a point in the marsh opposite the boat, he called out:

"Do not be alarmed, I will soon be with you."

He saw that one of them was in tears, and appeared to be

much excited; the other, who seemed quite self-possessed, inquired:

"How can you get to us?"

The answer he returned was a plunge into the water, and then doing his best to urge his way towards them. They at once expressed great delight, but their joy was of short duration. The youth, in his ardor to get to them, had not made any calculation for the tide, and although he was approaching the boat, that was also going from him. Nor did he realize how far the boat was from the shore; he did not stop to think whether he had ever swam so far before, nor whether the labor he had just gone through might not have exhausted his strength, and without calculating his chance for life, off he went into the deep water.

The girls noticed that he was getting tired; he had, indeed, approached comparatively near to them, but he was obliged to suspend his efforts; a few moments he lay merely sustaining his head above the water; again the distance between them is increasing. One of them called out:

"Oh, do go back—go back! you cannot reach us."

But he knew there was no return for him, he was too far from shore; he must reach the boat or perish. Again his arms are extended, he is battling it lustily, he is making a desperate effort, he blows the water from his mouth and calls out:

"An oar, an oar, quick!"

The oar was at once over the side.

"Shall I throw it to you?"

"Hold on—hold on to the end of it."

He has almost reached it; again he seems to be giving out; as if by instinct, she who held the oar said to him—

"You have almost reached it! Oh, try once more—do try!"

The encouraging voice aroused him; a few desperate strokes, and he grasped the blade.

"Emma, Emma, come help! Oh, do, quick; I cannot hold it!"

"Hold on a moment—let me rest. Don't let go, or I must sink." In a few moments more he said, "Draw it in."

And using their main strength, they have drawn him within an arm's length! The girl who had been the most active

now reached out her hand, she lying down well within the boat; he grasped it, and with that gentle aid is enabled to seize hold of the side, and in a moment more is lying in the boat! He is saved, but for the time almost powerless!

"Do not be alarmed: I shall soon be better. Take care of the oar."

"Oh, what can we do for you? You have injured yourself in trying to save us!"

He looked at the beautiful girl, whose interest for him was manifest in her earnest expression as she leaned over him.

"Only tired!"

It was not long, however, before he was able to sit up; he saw that the wind was coming, and, weak as he was, took the oar, and fitting it to the stern, soon sculled to the shore, and running the prow well into the mud, stuck the oar down at the side of the boat, and thus made her fast. The storm, which had been so threatening, however, passed off to the north. There was a little brush of wind, a few drops of rain, and all was calm again, and the sun came out to shed his cheer over the waters.

"Have you but one oar?"

"Only one! The other is in the mud, near where we started from."

"It will be hard sculling against the tide; but I must try it."

It proved, as he said, "hard sculling against the tide;" but the tedium of the way was beguiled by the pleasant chit-chat of his companions. Young persons, under such circumstances, require no formal introduction. They soon learned each other's names, and after the girls had said all they could to assure him how grateful they felt for the efforts he had made for their rescue, they turned to other topics, and soon learned that his name was Henry Thornton; that he was at Maple Cove on a visit to Mr. Malcolm, the miller; that he lived at Stratton, about ten miles from Maple Cove, and that his mother had married a Mr. Langstaff, whom the girls knew very well: that is, they knew there was such a man, and they knew where his house stood; and then they wondered, or at least one of them said she wondered, how it was they had never seen him before; but the other, and she was the one who had held out the oar for him, and had manifested such an interest for him, said—

"I think, cousin Emma, we *have* seen him before. Do you not remember the time we were so frightened by a dog, when we were strawberrying this summer?"

And Miss Emma looked at him again, and Henry smiled, and said—

"I remembered your faces as soon as I saw you, when I was on the marsh, but I did not know your names!"

And then, as was very natural, they told him their names, and who they were: that Emma was the daughter of Esquire Thompson; that they lived at Stratton too; and that Louise was her cousin; that her name was Louise Lovelace; and that they had come with her mother and father to Maple Cove; that her father was a lawyer, and was attending court at Maple Cove, and that her mother had brought them down to the mill for a walk. All this was said by Miss Emma, who was the chief speaker, and then she inquired—

"Do you know where our place is at Stratton?"

"I have seen it. It is a very beautiful place!"

"Are you fond of fishing?"

"Oh, yes, that I am."

"We have a beautiful fishpond. Will you not come to see us, and we will take you there? The sunfish are as thick as anything!"

"I should be very happy to do so. It is not often, however, that I can be spared; I am in the field most of the time, but I will try to come."

And thus by the time they had reached the place from where the boat had started, no one could have told that anything serious had occurred, or that any of them had been so lately in real danger, or that they had not known each other always; except that the young gentleman treated the young ladies with great deference, and although they called him Henry, or at least Miss Emma did, he was very careful to say Miss Louise, or Miss Emma, when speaking to them.

The moment the boat was again at the shore, Mrs. Thompson, for we may as well call her by name now, first embraced her girls, and perhaps shed a few tears of joy, and then approached the young gentleman, and taking his hand—

"I know not what to say to you, my dear boy; nor how to express my obligations to you for your manly, resolute conduct! What should we have done, but for you?" And

Mrs. Thompson put her hand in her pocket, as though feeling for her purse; but Louise touched her arm; she saw that Henry had anticipated her aunt's design, for not all the exertions he had made had brought such a deep color to his cheeks; and Louise whispered a few sentences to her.

"Indeed! Well, Master Henry, I hear that this is not the first time that you have interfered for the rescue of these young ladies! Both they and myself feel under very, very great obligations, and I must request, as a particular favor to me, that you will come and see me when you return to Stratton. Will you promise me?"

"It would give me great pleasure, madam, to do so."

"And I shall certainly take the liberty of calling upon your mother, for the purpose of congratulating her that she has such a noble son."

Master Henry felt very much abashed by hearing such compliments paid to him, while two pairs of the prettiest eyes he had ever seen were looking intently at him. He had managed, while the lady was busy caressing the girls on their jumping ashore, to slip on so much of his wardrobe as he had thrown off when starting on his expedition, and, with the exception of a collar rather limpsy, and some spots on his trousers, he was quite respectably arrayed. His hair, of a dark brown color, looked none the worse for being in a dishevelled condition, as it had a tendency to curl when left to itself; his forehead was fair and open; his features well formed; his complexion light, easily affected by the sun, and there were, no doubt, some freckles on his cheeks, but not enough to attract notice. Perhaps the most expressive feature was a peculiarly bright, soft eye, of a rich hazel color, shaded by long dark brown lashes. He was sixteen, and of fair size for that age; his form well proportioned, and he held himself erect, and was quick in all his motions. Altogether, he was not an unpleasant object for the gaze of young ladies, especially under the circumstances in which he and they were placed.

Mr. Malcolm had been quite silent during the time that Mrs. Thompson was expressing her kind feelings. The old gentleman had been in a state of great excitement during the whole scene, until he could clearly perceive his little craft, with its precious freight, coming slowly back; and when he found

all was doing well, and the danger past, he very naturally began talking of the boy, and telling some things about him and his mother which no doubt tended to increase an interest for him in the mind of the lady. So that he was very willing to be a silent spectator, enjoying, no doubt, much satisfaction in the thought that Henry would now have a chance to be acquainted with some of the "great folks" at Stratton, for he knew Esquire Thompson by repute, although not personally intimate with that gentleman.

"And now, madam, will you and your daughters just walk up the hill and stop a few minutes in our old house, and my woman will give you a good drink of milk, or small beer, or cold water, whichever you like best. That shower we feared so much has gone round; but there is another coming right after it, and it is 'most fixed already."

The lady saw that rain was evidently near at hand, and perhaps willing to gratify one who had been so very kind, made no objections. At once the little party was on its way up the rising ground of which we have spoken. Henry accompanied the young ladies, who walked on at some distance ahead, and kept up a lively conversation about the different events in the scene they had just passed through.

Mr. Malcolm had some things to say likewise to the lady by whose side he was walking.

"It made me very happy, madam, to hear you invite that boy so cordially to your house. You see, from what I hear, but not from Henry, he is very loth to say anything that might throw blame on his mother, but folks from Stratton have told me how it is. You see she has done a very foolish thing—asking pardon, madam—but I call it a foolish thing, she was well to do, in a plain way, and she had only this child; but Mr. Langstaff heard about her, and he came to see her, and put on his best no doubt, and got round her some how, and the poor thing goes and marries him, and sells her nice place, or *he* did after they were married. Well, they say he is a grinding sort of a man—rough in his ways, too—and don't have the right feeling that a man ought to have for a wife—don't treat her ill may be, but according to my notion, don't treat her as a woman who has been used to kind treatment ought to be treated; and I guess, too, he feels a little jealous of the boy, and tries to make him rough like

his own sons—don't like to see him dressed up—and don't like his gentlemanly ways—and don't like his playing music, and all that; you see the boy has a natural turn for it. He works—works hard, folks tell me! He always does his stint with the best of them, but he has got the gentleman in him, any one can see that, and I guess it won't get out of him, work as hard as he may, or dress him as they please—in tow cloth, or what not—and seeing things are so, it will be a great thing for him to mingle a little, once in a while, with folks that don't have but one dish in the middle of the table, and all help themselves higgledy piggledy—manners are as good for poor folks as well as for rich folks, as I take it, madam."

Mr. Malcolm, as we have said at our first introduction of him to the reader, was a fleshy man, but as we are about to describe the mill, it may be as well to give a few more particulars of the gentleman himself, as he and his mill were part and parcel of each other. He was indeed a fine sample of one who makes his living by grinding grists. He was a portly man even when in middle life, but as years rolled along, he gradually increased in flesh, his face grew rounder, and his eyes grew smaller, or so they appeared to do, until they looked like two little twinkling stars set in carbuncle, his face was so ruddy, and when not obscured by meal, shone like that glittering stone.

Mr. Malcolm was one upon whom care sat lightly; and in whose heart no bad passions had much place. He had pursued an honest calling in an honest way, kept clear of debt, at least he had done so for many years, and never allowed himself to be troubled with "new-fangled notions" about improved machinery, or any short cuts to wealth. The old mill had stood beside the old dam, nobody then living could tell how long. It had been propped and patched, and kept along just about so. The old wheel, a broad, low concern, with its outer rim just rising above the head of water that was pouring upon it, was well covered over with green moss or sliine, and kept turning, on the same steady jog it had started upon, perhaps a century ago. The little old house, too, squatted close by the mill, had a venerable look, for the roof was covered with moss, and the shingles which formed the outer covering of the house were quite grey with age, and some of them much warped by the sunshine and the storms. It was, however, a

tight building still, and as it had served Mr. Malcolm's father and grandfather, he had no idea but it would serve him too.

The whole concern was situated, as has been said, very near the waters of the Sound, which found their way by a small creek, through an extended marsh, and afforded an outlet for the little stream upon which the dam and mill were erected.

A prettier or more convenient place for a mill, at least for a small one, can scarcely be conceived. A slight gorge in the hills, which abound in that vicinity, afforded an opening for a small stream, which came stealing along in silence through its pebbly bed, among alders and yellow willows, until meeting the dam, which extended across from hill to hill, it spread out into a pretty pond. It was an unfailing stream, and although the fall of water was but a few feet, there was always power enough to keep the broad wheel going, with its two runs of stones. The view from the mill and dwelling was quite extensive, at least in one direction, for there was nothing to obstruct a free sight of the waters of the Sound, the headlands on either side of the cove or inlet, and the distant shores of Long Island. There were no dwellings in the immediate vicinity that could be seen, for the slight hills which rose behind, hid them from view. The town of Maple Cove itself was about a mile distant. When Mr. Malcolm and the lady reached the house, Henry had already introduced the girls, and Mrs. Malcolm herself was at the door, with a smile on her pleasant face, ready to welcome her new guest, and although the inside of the house was not quite so plain as the outside, yet the whole affair was of the humblest order. But there was no lack of good things at once brought out from a clean and very tempting buttery—such pie, and cake, and bread, and butter, and beer, and milk, and cool water, the girls said they had never tasted before. Perhaps the circumstances added somewhat to the relish, although it must be confessed, the appearance of the hostess, as well as that of her husband, told very plainly, that good fare must have been generally somewhere within their reach.

The shower passed over, long before the young folks had done with the good things, for the hearts of those who had so bountifully spread them out, seemed to take great delight in witnessing the zest which was manifested in their recep-

tion. Everything had a better taste, no doubt, from the very kind and hospitable manner in which piece after piece was forced upon their plates. Their protestations were taken for naught.

"It always seems to me," said the old lady, "that pie and cake must be good for children, they take to them so naturally?"

Henry accompanied the ladies far enough to show them the most desirable road to the town, and he would no doubt willingly have piloted them the whole distance; his modesty, however, prompted him not to venture upon such an experiment, and satisfied with his afternoon's experience, he took a pleasant leave, and returned to the mill.

## CHAPTER II.

Mr. Langstaff was one of your hard-working farmers, and estimated all men—and perhaps all women, too—according to their ability or turn for manual labor. He laid great stress upon it, and had but a poor opinion of what he called "head-work," either in the house or in the field. By dint of hard work and close living, he had become possessed of considerable land, that being to him the *summum bonum* of prosperity. It was not, indeed, all very good land, but the number of acres was large, and there was plenty of work to be done upon it.

Mr. Langstaff was called by many a good, substantial man. That is, he did not spend his time idly; he frequented no taverns; he encouraged no useless expense for his person or his family.

A farmer's life, according to his opinion, was of necessity one that did not admit of improvement. Old-fashioned ways, both as regards the economy of the family and the field, were to him the "better ways." To have enough to eat and to wear, and to make the two ends of the year meet, was all he thought necessary. The little refinements of life he had no taste for; "homespun was good enough for him," and rag carpet she fancied "before any of the new-fangled boughten things." "His father, and his grandfather, had lived on rye and potatoes and pork, and he had been brought up on them, and his boys could do the same." "To read and write and cypher was all the learning he ever got, and it was all a man wanted, without he was going to be a clergyman, or such like."

Mr. Langstaff was also *said* to be a pious man. He was, indeed, a member of the Church, and very regular in his attendance on the Sabbath; and to see him as he entered

the House of God and walked up the aisle to his seat among the foremost pews—his hair smooth and shiny, and his countenance so demure—it was enough to make an impression, especially on those who lay much stress on such matters.

It is not for us to say how little religion a man may have, and yet be safe. Mr. Langstaff may have been what he professed to be. But we fear his religion consisted more in the smooth hair, the demure countenance, the steady behavior, and the solemn tone of voice, at set times, than in contrition of heart, unselfish love, and humble faith.

Mr. Langstaff had married early in life, and as his companion was, no doubt, of his way of thinking, their household presented, after some years had passed, a very rough appearance. Three boys had been given to them, and they were all that such parents could have wished! They worked, because they were compelled to. They were rough in their speech and manners, because they had been taught in that way. They learned as little as possible the few months of the year they were allowed to go to school, because they heard their parents speak disparagingly of "book learning." And they were not very respectful to their teachers, for the reason that they were never treated at home with kindness and respect, and had learned on all occasions to "give as good as they got." In process of time, Mrs. Langstaff broke down under her drudgery, and her unvaried, monotonous, cart-horse life came to an end.

Mr. Langstaff was a widower, and in a few months on the look-out for *somebody!* Hired help was expensive, and generally wasteful. A wife would cost nothing after the wedding fee was paid, except for clothing. And linsey-woolsey was not dear!

How he got acquainted with the Widow Thornton is not material. Nor how it happened that Mr. Langstaff made himself so agreeable to her as to win her consent, we cannot pretend to say. Somehow it was managed, and very much to the astonishment of all who knew the parties. Mr. Thornton had been a tender husband, and was a man of considerable refinement. The widow had been left with one child, a son. She had a snug homestead and a small income, and was under no necessity to marry for a support. She was not

ignorant, either, of some peculiarities in Mr. Langstaff which have been mentioned. No doubt she believed, as many women do, "that she could make him over." She meant to take her own furniture, and fix up the house when it should become her home, and make him social by frequent visits abroad, and having neighbors and friends visit them.

And when Mrs. Thornton became Mrs. Langstaff, there was, indeed, for some few weeks, a lighting up of the drear house. The change, however, was only a spasmodic effort on the part of Mr. Langstaff. He soon relapsed into his old habits; kept on his working frock at the table; persisted in sitting in the kitchen, company or no company! Slept most of the evening, and gave such broad hints about wasting money and time with visitors, that Mrs. Langstaff soon lost what ambition she had brought with her, and being compelled to labor almost constantly, would no doubt have become as indifferent as her husband to all but the bare necessities of life, had it not been for a counteracting influence which a mother's heart could not well resist.

Henry, the little son of Mrs. Thornton, was ten years old at his father's death; and not being favorably located for the enjoyment of suitable schools, he had been taught by his father, and subsequently by his mother. So that, at fourteen, he was more thoroughly acquainted with the elementary branches of an English education than most boys of his age in that vicinity.

It was, no doubt, a misfortune to be educated alone; being naturally retiring, he needed the company of boys of his own age, rather than such companions as he found in his father's library. What were his mother's views respecting a life-business for him, cannot now be known. Perhaps she thought little about it! He was her pet, the joy of her life. Her small income was sufficient for their present necessities, by living in a frugal way. The child, therefore, grew to be a still, thoughtful boy, and at fourteen had read more books than most young men of twenty-one. He was not disposed to be idle; whatever he saw necessary to be done, he did promptly and with apparent pleasure. And when no work seemed to demand his care, a book, or instrument of music, was at once his resort. For the latter he had a peculiar talent, which manifested itself at an early period: an old

piano, which had been used by Mrs. Thornton when a girl, but which she never, or very seldom, sat down to after her marriage, was made by little Henry "to discourse sweet music," at least to the ears of parents.

The library to which Henry had access contained but few books. Some volumes of history and biography, a volume of natural history, one or two of the old poets, a copy of Shakspeare, Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, and a few magazines. Like most boys, could he have had his choice, he would have devoured any quantity of the story kind; but not having that privilege, after going over again and again the few he possessed, he was driven, by a kind of necessity, to those which contained more useful matter. So that although the knowledge he gathered was much mixed up and disconnected, yet what he learned stimulated his search for more; and at least he acquired a habit for reading, which prevented much that might have been evil, if it did not fit him for the business of life.

Whatever his feelings were at the prospect of his mother's marriage with one who had been a perfect stranger, he manifested no repugnance to it. Possibly the thought that he was to be introduced to a new place and to new scenes rather pleased his childish fancy. And that he was also to mingle with boys of his own age, who would stand in the relation of brothers to him, might have had its charm for one who had hitherto been without fraternal experience.

The pleasure, however, from the new arrangement was doomed to be of short duration. The aspect of the country around Stratton, where Mr. Langstaff lived, was strikingly in contrast with that of Maple Cove, his native place. Stratton was an inland town, or that portion of it where his future home was to be. For at least two miles in every direction, it exhibited a plain, uninteresting surface; no hills of any magnitude, and only a few rolling eminences, rather forbidding to the view; for the bare rocks had but a light covering at their base to support vegetation, and neither cedars, spruce, nor pines could live among them. A mighty change indeed from the rich and varied scenery at Maple Cove, where a vast expanse of the blue water spread as far as the eye could reach. Fine headlands, and lofty hills, where mighty rocks peeped out through the rich turf; and dells too, in which towered the

noble oak and maple; while beneath their spreading branches sparkling streams came stealing down from the far off mountains.

It was a great change to Henry, and his young heart felt it sadly. But a much more serious disappointment awaited him in the social scenery to which he was introduced. For the first few weeks everything was done to make the new home agreeable. The horses were at the command of the boys when the parents did not need them, to take their new brother round and show him the place, and to call on the few families with whom they associated; and company was invited to their house, and Henry was asked to play on the instrument which his mother had brought with her. At first they seemed to take much pride in showing him off, and were apparently pleased when their visitors expressed astonishment at his performance. But it soon became an old story, and what was at first, from its novelty, a matter of pride, became by degrees a cause of jealousy, and at length of absolute dislike.

Henry's mother soon found that both she and her son had gotten into the wrong place, but she kept the sad secret in her own heart. Day by day she toiled on. The family was large during the more busy seasons of the year, when several hired men were always added to their number. Female help was hard to get, at least for the wages Mr. Langstaff was willing to pay, and the whole burden of the household came upon her. She had never been accustomed to it, but, womanlike, toiled on, trying to keep up a cheerful countenance for the sake of Henry, and to make his home as agreeable as she could. But her frame was delicate, and after two years, weaknesses often confined her to her bed. Against these she struggled on, at times laboring to do what was absolutely necessary, when scarcely able to go from room to room, until at length nature gave way, and her emaciated frame was confined to the bed from which she was to be carried to her grave.

It was just after the noon meal, on a warm day in the early part of summer, about one year from the time when our story opens, that Mr. Langstaff walked up into the room where his sick wife lay, not to see how she was, or what she needed, but to vent some of his feelings respecting Henry.

"What has he been doing, Mr. Langstaff? I hope he does not mean to trouble you."

"It's the same old story that I have told you again and again; the boy is good for nothing, and he never will be good for nothing, if he is let to go on."

"Perhaps, husband—perhaps he may take a turn, one of these days; he does not seem to be getting any bad ways, does he?"

"Bad ways! Why as to that, it don't signify; maybe if he was downright bad, something might be made out of him; but what is he a-going to be good for?"

"Why he works, does he not, husband? I know he never was very strong, but he always seems to me to be willing to do anything he is told to do; at least it was so when I was about; my sickness, maybe, has made a difference. Poor child! he will soon be fatherless and motherless."

And the feeble woman heaved a deep sigh, and laid her white handkerchief for a moment over her pale, emaciated countenance. Mr. Langstaff, no doubt, observed that his wife was much troubled, but his eye was turned to some object in another part of the room. He did not look like one who could sympathize with weakness and suffering; he certainly made no attempt to do so; perhaps his own sturdy frame, which seemed to bid defiance to the power of disease, wholly unfitted him for a place beside a sick bed. Silently he sat and listened to her short breathing until at length the invalid dropped her hand upon the outer covering of the bed and heaved a deep sigh.

"I am sorry, Mr. Langstaff; as it has turned out, our union has not been a benefit to either of us. I have suffered much from sickness and consequent anxiety on your account, and I know you cannot have had much comfort with a wife so feeble. And I have been troubled about Henry; he does not seem, for some reason, to please you or any of the family, and yet from all that I can see he is not willful nor mischievous, and seems ready to work, and yet he does not appear to be in the right place."

"That is it, Mrs. Langstaff." And Mr. Langstaff straightened himself in his chair, and was evidently much excited. "That's it, he aint in his right place; no, no; we aint good enough for him; he'd do much better to live in a fine house,

with plenty of servants to wait upon him, and music and dancing and all that; plain farmer's folks ain't good enough for him."

"Don't—don't, dear husband; don't talk so, you do not understand Henry."

"I understand well enough—I understand. Esquire Thompson's is the only place good enough for him. Yes"——

The gentleman stopped suddenly, for a step was heard, and a hand was on the latch. The door gently opened, and with a noiseless step Henry entered. A moment he paused and held the door in his hand, as if doubtful whether to proceed further. Mr. Langstaff, however, at once arose and walked heavily from the room. And Henry came up to the bed and took the seat which had been just vacated.

"You seem to be much exhausted, dear mother."

"I am very weak, Henry; my mortal struggles will soon be over, and but for you, I have no desire to live."

"Any new trouble, mother? am I the cause of it?"

"Oh no, my dear child; you are not the cause, but"——

"But what, mother!"

"Oh well, it is the old story; I fear you will never be able to please your father. I fear sometimes that some evil-minded person keeps exciting him against you. He has the idea that you feel above work, and too good to associate with his sons, your brothers, and that you are too fond of visiting; maybe it has not been so well that the squire's family have noticed you so much, and perhaps you had better not go there only once in a great while."

Had Mrs. Langstaff looked at her son, she would have seen his fine face suffused with a burning blush, and his bright eye bedimmed with a tear. But the blush was not caused by any sense of wrong committed by him. Her words had gone to his heart and awakened feelings which to that moment he had been able to suppress. Words were ready to break forth that would no doubt have exposed to his mother the true reason for all this anxiety on his account. But his judgment warned him that such exposure would only tend to alienate her mind from him whom she had placed as a father over her only child; and such a result would embitter the few remaining days of her life. "No! he would do all a loving son could to soothe her feeble spirit."

"Perhaps, mother, it may be so; perhaps some evil-minded person is endeavoring to misrepresent me. But rest assured I shall be more and more careful to please my father. In time he will be convinced that I am faithful to do all my part of the work. And as to visiting at Esquire Thompson's, perhaps I may have gone there too frequently; but it does not seem to me any one can be injured by it. I never go but of an evening, or once or twice when I have had leave of an afternoon. But I can refrain from that pleasure, if my going there will give you, dear mother, one moment's uneasiness or trouble."

Perhaps Mrs. Langstaff was satisfied with what Henry had said, or other matters of some importance to her child just then obtruded upon her thoughts. She changed the subject of conversation.

"You know, Henry, we had a little property when I married Mr. Langstaff."

"I have never known about it, mother."

"Well, I have been wrong, perhaps, in not talking with you more freely on that subject. You see, Henry, I have been—I have not been so careful as I might have been."

"Perhaps you had better not trouble yourself to talk about it now, mother. You are very much exhausted. I fear you have been too much excited during the last hour. Try to rest, mother. I will see you in the course of the evening."

As if conscious that Henry's advice was good, and perhaps willing just then to be relieved from unpleasant explanations, she pressed his hand, which she had been holding, and turned herself over as though to court the sleep he had recommended. Henry stood a few moments in silence by her side, and then with a quick step left the room.

The last words he was ever to hear from her who had been hitherto all of life to him, had been spoken. In one short hour from the time he left the room he was called by one of his brothers while attending to his appointed work.

"Harry! Harry! do you hear? They say your mother's a-dying!"

Henry made all speed to the sick chamber, and reached it just in time to hear her last sigh! With intense emotion he gazed upon the dear emaciated features; placed his hand upon the pale forehead, and wiped the death-damp away;

touched gently the eye-lids—they readily closed. No tear fell from his eye, no word escaped his lips. There were sighs, as there always are at such scenes, and tears too; for women were there, and they have kind hearts; and had there been no others present, he would have let out the agony of his. But not then! not there! No, he would die first! He indulged no malice; but as he entered the room his father-in-law was by the bedside, and Henry had heard his piteous exclamation addressed to himself, as he came up to look on the beloved form:

"Ah, she is gone, Henry! It is her gain, I trust; she is better off, no doubt."

And his young heart would have broken before he would have allowed a tear to tell one whom he knew had never done a single act to relieve her weary way, that they had in that dear cold form a common interest! A while he stood and looked upon the dead. What thoughts rioted within his young breast no one there could guess; but a great change was working—had indeed already passed upon him. The moment when he realized that he was alone in life, with no mother to feel for him, with the hard field of life before him, on which he must battle as he best could, a power waked up within him of which he himself had not hitherto been conscious. He was no longer the retiring and, as others thought, the effeminate boy. He almost felt the strength of manhood nerving his frame. He was now ready to do and to dare.

One and another of the family and of the neighbors came in with slow and solemn pace; took a hasty glance at the dead; and with slow and solemn pace went out again.

Mr. Langstaff, too, had heaved his last sigh, and with slow and solemn pace he too left the room. Henry heeded them not; until one of the females who had been much with his sick mother approached him, and in a gentle tone asked:

"Had you not better go now, dear? It is hard, I know, to lose a mother! Go and try to rest, and try to bear it."

Covering his face—for the tears need not now be restrained—he turned and walked away. He cared not to mingle with the family, and therefore retired to his small room in the attic. Secure from interruption for some time at least, here he wept, as a loving child may weep for such a loss. And when the floods had ceased, he arose, and by every means in

his power endeavored to remove all signs of the deep sorrow that had come upon him. Henry had business to transact that evening, and he wished to be prepared for it. His thoughts had been working rapidly. Even while beside his mother's corpse, had plans been formed that would shape his course for life. But the business more immediately upon his mind was, if possible, to prevent the interment of his parent in the burying-place at Stratton.

He did not intend to remain there himself. No one who had ever known or loved her reposed there. No one would ever in that place visit her grave to weep there. He wished to have her placed by the side of his father at Maple Cove. They had lived happily together; and wherever his lot might be cast, he wished to know that, in the churchyard which had been so often passed through by them and him upon the Sabbath-day, they lay side by side.

Whether Mr. Langstaff would have any objections he knew not, nor could he imagine on what account. But he must make the request, and that at once, as some preparations would of course be necessary beyond those of a funeral near at hand.

As soon as he felt sufficiently composed, he descended into the kitchen, the place where in all probability he would find his father-in-law.

The gentleman was there, seated near a window; his coat off, his chin resting upon his breast, his hands folded before him. He was enjoying a quiet nap.

Henry's footstep aroused him; he raised his head, looked a moment as doubting who it might be; but recognizing his son-in-law, his countenance at once assumed an unusually blank expression, and in tones quite soft and broken—

"Ah! it is you, my son, is it? Come, sit down. Ah! it is a sad time for us, Henry! You and I, and all of us I may say, have met with a sad loss. Come, sit down!"

Henry had no intention of taking a seat, and the peculiar manner of his father-in-law was not unnoticed by him. It but added fuel to the fire already kindled in his breast.

"Mr. Langstaff!" Henry had always called him father. The gentleman fairly started; he was fully awakened; but he had no time to express any surprise, for although Henry hesitated after thus pronouncing the name, it was but a moment:

"If you have no serious objections, sir, I should prefer to have my mother buried at Maple Cove."

"Why so?" The voice of Mr. Langstaff was quite husky.

"There are several reasons, sir, why I wish it. One, perhaps, will be sufficient as an apology for my making the request. My father lies in the churchyard there, and I wish that they might repose in the dust together."

Mr. Langstaff did not immediately respond; he was noted as a very prudent man; his neighbors gave him that character. And there were some things to think of beside the request just made to him. Henry's manner appeared strange, and he was trying to imagine what it meant, and to what it might lead. As matters stood between him and this orphan boy, there might be difficulty; he therefore moved with caution.

"It's quite a distance to Maple Cove: all of twelve miles! But"—

"I do not wish any persons to be put to inconvenience on account of the distance. I can accompany the remains of my mother alone!"

"You are too fast, Henry, too fast; I was going on to say: It was quite a distance, to be sure. But if it is your wish, I and my family will gladly comply with it. It shall certainly be as you desire."

"I thank you, sir. And now, Mr. Langstaff, I have further to ask you, whether anything will be coming to me from the estate of my mother?"

"Coming to you?"

"Yes, sir, coming to me."

"From the estate of your mother?"

"Yes, sir, coming to me from the estate of my mother."

Mr. Langstaff had to collect his thoughts; he was silent a few moments.

"Your mother's estate! Well, and how much do you suppose would be left of it, taking into the account all the expense and trouble I have been put to? Sickness after sickness! Nobody to see to the family; servants to be hired! Doctor's bills to pay! It has been a very poor concern for me, I can assure you; a very poor concern."

Henry might have said many things in reply; but his heart was too full. He knew Mr. Langstaff to be a close man; but

he had never before an idea how far he carried his calculations of profit and loss. He knew that his poor mother had been a faithful drudge; that soon after she came to that house the servant had been dismissed; that through long days and evenings he had seen her toiling, toiling on. He had seen her gradually sinking under the constant round she was obliged to tread, and he well knew that the sickness which at last laid her upon the bed of death, was the result of this ceaseless toil, unrelieved by the care or affection of him whom she had called her husband! Yes, he knew it well; neither his eye nor his heart had been closed. A chapter had been written upon his memory that could never be erased; and with a perfect loathing of the man who could now speak of her as he would of a beast of burden that had proved unprofitable, he resolved to cut short this, the last interview he ever wished to have with him or his.

"You have said enough, Mr. Langstaff! I leave the matter forever with you, and you can settle it with Him who judges the widow and fatherless. I will meet my mother's corpse in the churchyard at Maple Cove. When may I expect it?"

"Do you not mean to follow as one of the mourners?" Mr. Langstaff was peculiarly sensitive in reference to public opinion. "What folks would think," or "what folks would say," was a consideration ever present to his mind. "It will appear very strange indeed! What will people say? You certainly ought to be willing to pay proper respect to your mother's remains!"

"I have done that, Mr. Langstaff, while she lived. I have watched by her through many a long night, and administered to her comfort, when but for me—the boy you have despised and sought to trample on—she would have been alone, unattended, uncared for! I only ask you, sir, to tell me when I may expect my mother's corpse at Maple Cove, that I may meet it there, and see her laid to rest beside the body of my father?"

Mr. Langstaff began to think that his only way was to make the best of a bad bargain: matters grew worse the longer he continued the conference.

"Why, I suppose it will be best to have the funeral services performed here to-morrow afternoon; and the next

morning, early, we can start and get to Maple Cove the middle of the forenoon. But the grave will have to be dug after we get there."

"I will see that the grave is ready, sir."

Making a slight obeisance, Henry retired to his room, and began preparations for leaving a home that had never been agreeable to him, but whose atmosphere was now loathsome in the extreme.

He took from his trunk the little purse into which he had put, from time to time, such small presents as his mother made him, from the trifling funds which she could call her own.

He counted its contents; there were about twenty dollars: a small sum, indeed, with which to be cast alone upon the world. But he felt that it was rightfully his own. Not one cent had been gathered from the store to which Mr. Langstaff had the least claim.

He then selected from his clothing such articles as he knew had been purchased by his mother from her own means, or had been prepared for him from garments belonging to his deceased father; and having put on his best suit, he gathered the remainder of his articles into a small valise, and with this in his hand, descended on his way from the house.

At the outer door he met the young woman who had been now for some weeks laboring in the family. She looked at him with surprise; he put out his hand.

"Good bye, Mary."

"Why, Henry, where are you going?"

"I am going to Maple Cove. I shall spend the night, probably, at Esquire Thompson's. You will not be likely to see me again. Good bye."

And before she had time to recover from her surprise, Henry, with a quick step, had passed through the gate, and was on his way to seek a resting-place for the night.

We will not stop to enter into the scene of that evening, when the whole matter became a subject for consideration with the collected family. That Henry had gone, was, perhaps, quite satisfactory; and if he had only gone from the place entirely, it would have been a further alleviation: they could then have put their own construction upon the fact of his not accompanying them to the place of sepulture.

But that he should have gone to Esquire Thompson's! The great man of that region; the very place, of all others, they could have wished he should not have gone! It was, indeed, a severe trial to their little minds; and no doubt they made themselves thoroughly unhappy on account thereof. But of Mr. Langstaff and his family we wish to say as little as possible. The low habits which belong to that class are the bane of country life. They have driven hundreds and thousands from the noble employment which the plough and the hoe afford. They are spots upon the beautiful face of nature! Independent they are, no doubt. And so is the Indian, with his blanket and his bow. Laborious! and so is the mule. But for all that is really useful, for all that sheds a charm upon the social condition, utterly a blank! And their religion is sadly in unison with their low ideas. It is cut to a pattern. It takes them to church on the Sabbath, and perhaps to the prayer-meeting. It leads to a very straight and apparently decorous course. It makes them very careful to observe certain proprieties in ecclesiastical and civil society; but it never opens their understanding "to behold the wondrous things out of the Law of God."

They are throughout their lives mere novices! Repeating set phrases—heaving set sighs at set times, and substituting rigid features for integrity of heart! Pure Christian love has but little power over them! The Christian graces find no room in their little minds—to act and manifest their beauty.

Henry paused, as he reached the top of a small eminence at no great distance from the house, and turned to take his last look at it and its premises. He could see it, for the moon was shining brightly. It was an unpainted building—two stories in front, and with a "lean to" roof in the rear. No tree threw a shadow over it. Rough stone fences encircled it. The pig-sty and the corn-crib, and the well and the hen-house, were all collected on its south side. Paths ran just where the footsteps made them, without regard to order or neatness. Henry knew them well—he remembered how sick his heart had often been as he trod through them; how the sun beat down upon the hard gravel stones—how at noon he had longed for a shade where he might throw himself—how he had seen his poor mother, toiling as a slave to feed

those who regarded her only as the purveyor of their recurring wants. His heart sickened as the past came surging on. At length, turning abruptly from the sight, he went on his way. A slight descent separated him from an object so distasteful, and he felt that it was forever

## CHAPTER III.

Esquire Thompson was the man of most note in these parts, his estate lay within view of the waters of the Sound, and was of itself a valuable property. The soil was rich, the prospect highly picturesque, and it was well wooded with valuable timber. He was a lawyer of some eminence, and had a lucrative practice for the country. He was esteemed a man of stern integrity, and knew how to assume gentlemanly manners when he felt disposed to do so. But from an indifference to the opinion of people in general, or an unhappy temperament, he did not succeed in gaining the love of neighbors and acquaintances. His temper was not always under proper subjection, and gave him, as well as others, not unfrequently some extra trouble. In his family, however, he was usually mild and affectionate, although, as men are perhaps too apt to be, rather disposed to regulate matters by his own will. His house was the resort of the more refined inhabitants of that vicinity, and quite a circle of acquaintances from the city of New York.

His excellent lady, to whom the reader has been partially introduced, was as distinguished for the benevolence of her heart, as for the beauty of her person and the elegance of her manners; and doubtless, it was owing to her very hospitable reception of visitors, that their home circle was so frequently enlarged by additions from abroad, for the squire was much away, either engaged in his office—a small building at some distance from the house—or attending court.

Henry had not been a very frequent visitor, although his reception was always cordial. He could, in general, only have time for visiting after the labors of the day were over, and in the season for labor it was out of the question. Winter evenings alone afforded him the opportunity, and an occasional holiday during the pleasanter months of the year. He was fond of going there, and no doubt it was a great benefit for him to be able to mingle with a circle where all the ameni-

ties of life were cherished, and where he was treated with that courtesy to which at home he was a stranger.

Besides the two young ladies—Louise the niece, and Emma the daughter, whom the reader will remember—two other daughters and a son, all younger than Miss Emma, constituted their immediate family.

Whether Miss Louise Lovelace was there merely on a visit, or was a permanent member of the family, Henry knew not, for he had never heard any mention made of the matter, nor had he presumed to ask the question. She had been trained very differently from the daughters of Mrs. Thompson. They had, no doubt, learned obedience from their childhood, it seemed so easy for them to yield up their wills and comply with parental requests. They had also a softness and delicacy of manner that must have been the result of great care, from a very early period, in pruning excrescences and cherishing the lovelier graces.

Louise did not lack kindness of heart, but it seemed at times, as if a hard struggle was going on within, to maintain just the deportment which she knew to be right; and while Emma, and Jane, and Amelia her cousins, were never at a loss for the pleasantest smile and the kindest manner, and the most happy address, Louise was obliged often to say nothing, or to act with apparent restraint. She had an impassioned nature, and often it chafed, because the feelings of the moment could not, with propriety, be let out. It could be seen in her bright eye and the curl of her arched lip—in the quick coursing of the rich blood, that in an instant would mantle her cheek, and tinge her brow and neck, and in her stately gait and erect form.

Louise had never been so free with Henry as had the other girls. She never attempted to correct him either in conversation, or at the piano, as Emma did, although she and Emma were of the same age; nor did she take pains to entertain him; and yet, at times, Henry would meet her bright eye which had been fixed upon him while others were engaging him in conversation, and at such a moment he would feel, why, he could not tell, that Louise, if he had a request to make, would be more ready than any one else to grant it. That Louise was thinking kindly of him, though she made no effort to show it.

On the evening in question, the girls, with their mother alone, formed the circle around the centre-table, all busily engaged with their needles, when the upper maid-servant came in, and with low voice addressed a few sentences to Mrs. Thompson.

"Can that be so, Maria?" and Mrs. Thompson laid down her work, and her countenance indicated much concern.

"What is it, mother?"

"Ask him to come in, Maria."

"I have, madam, but he wishes to see you alone, if it will not be too much trouble."

"Tell him I will come immediately."

"Who is it, mother? Do tell us."

"It is Henry! His mother is dead! He is on his way to Maple Cove, and would like to stay here to-night. I think there must be something out of the way." And Mrs. Thompson arose and left the room.

"Now, Emma, there must be some truth in the reports which have come to us. Poor Henry! He has had a hard life of it."

"And we ought to be glad, then, that we have always tried to make it pleasant for him here. I wonder what he means to do? or whether he has friends at Maple Cove—no doubt he has."

"But he has no relations there, sister Emma. For I asked him once if he had any uncles or aunts, and he said—no, he had not. How bad it must be not to have any friends!"

"Are we not his friends, Janie?"

"Oh yes! But I was thinking of relations; friends are well enough sometimes, but not like relations—an uncle or aunt, or cousin. One would not feel so all alone in the world—don't you think so, cousin Louise?"

Louise did not at once reply, and as she was looking intently on her work, the little speaker, no doubt, supposed that her question was not heard, and repeated it although in a little different form. But Louise was an attentive listener—for the reason that the subject was one of intense interest to her. Perceiving that her cousin expected a reply, she, without changing her attitude, answered—

"Yes—certainly."

Her hesitation and the deep color that suffused her cheeks

were noticed by all present. But no allusion whatever was made to the circumstance.

As Mrs. Thompson reëntered the parlor there was a general exclamation.

"Where is Henry?"

"It would be painful, I suppose, for him to form one of our circle to-night. Poor fellow! he has met with a great loss."

"Why is he going to Maple Cove?"

"His mother is to be interred there."

"Does he intend to remain at Maple Cove, aunt?" This was the first intimation Louise had given that she took any interest in the subject.

"I think not—he will doubtless return to Stratton; for his mother, I have always heard, had a snug little property of her own; and, of course, to some of it he will have a claim. But I shall see him in the morning and will try to ascertain how he is situated and what are his views for the future."

After Mrs. Thompson had held quite an interview with Henry in the morning, she came with him into the parlor that he might bid farewell to the young ladies.

There was a manifest difference in the feeling exhibited by Louise and her cousins in taking leave of Henry. The latter were not ashamed to let it be seen that they felt it as a sore trial. They had learned through their mother that he would not return to Stratton. He was going off to take care of himself. He had nothing to receive from his mother's property, and it would be many years, if ever, before they could again see him. How could they, as they gave him the last friendly grasp, and spoke the word "good bye," but cover their faces and let their tears have vent. They felt sad to lose one who had made himself very agreeable as a companion—but they felt more keenly the fact that he was going under such circumstances.

Louise shed no tears, and scarcely spoke the word "good bye." In fact, between her and Henry, it was but a silent clasp of the hand, and a flushing of the cheek. What either felt, none could have told. Henry had not opened his lips during the whole parting scene—his heart was too full. To him it was a parting from all that was pleasant in life—from every heart that he believed had any interest in him. That he felt a deeper pang as Louise came up with her beautiful

countenance flushed, indeed, but without a tear-drop; without an audible word—her eye calmly fixed upon his, and their hands clasped. No one could have told—no one, perhaps, thought of the matter. All were sad, for themselves, and for him.

Henry is off—they watch him as he closes the gate and, with his little portmanteau in hand, walks on his way with his usual quick step.

"Poor fellow! He is going to bury his mother, and then find his way as he best can into the busy world! Henry is a brave boy and has a more noble, manly spirit than some give him credit for."

As Mrs. Thompson said this, Louise walked away from the window—she had been looking with the rest, and as she left the room, little Jane remarked:

"I don't see how it is that cousin Louise can keep back her tears—I am sure Henry always thought everything of her. But, may be, she has gone to have a cry all by herself."

No reply was made to this remark, as Louise, although treated with much kindness, had, from some circumstances peculiar to her situation, not quite that congeniality which they could all have wished, and many things which she did were allowed to pass without comment.

As riding on horseback was a favorite pastime with her, and as she usually went alone, it was no surprise to the family to see her mounted on Pomp, her own pony, soon after breakfast, and galloping off at a round rate.

The highway which passed the mansion of Esquire Thompson was that which led through the chief towns bordering on the Sound, and Maple Cove being one of these, Henry, of course, was then traversing it, and was no doubt some few miles on his way, for nearly an hour had elapsed since he started.

That Louise had some other object in view than merely a ride for pleasure, was very evident. For she started at a full gallop, to the no small displeasure of the old hostler, who muttered not a few harsh expressions against her; no doubt having in view some extra trouble over Pomp's lathered hide when again committed to his care.

About one mile from the house, a lane ran off from the

highway, apparently diverging almost at right angles—but in reality leading by a short cut into the highway again, as the latter was obliged to take a circuitous route in doubling the eminences that jut out into the Sound and the coves that so frequently run up into the land. Into this lane Louise turned, and it may as well be said at once, that she did so that she might attain a point upon the highway before Henry should reach it; for she was in pursuit of *him*. And yet she did not care to have her motive so prominent as she thought it would be, if she should follow him upon the road and come up behind him on a gallop. Pomp was put to his speed through the lane, and being very confident that Henry could not yet have passed that point, she immediately, on entering the highway, brought her pony to a walk, turning his head towards home.

What her motives were in seeking the interview, perhaps she hardly knew. But she was very unhappy—she was sad at losing one who, for particular reasons, could sympathize with *her* as she thought no one else could, and she had strong sympathy for *him*. There had been more in common between them, than any of the family knew of besides herself. She had not been as free with *him* as she now wished she had been. He had communicated to *her* many of his trials; but her own she had not told *him*—and she was not satisfied with the manner of their parting. She had not acted as she felt—she might never see him again, and she resolved their last adieu should not be always a reproach to her heart. What she should say to him, or how she would feel when they met, was not a subject of thought until she was expecting every moment to see him. For nearly a mile she allowed Pomp to amble along at a gentle pace, hoping as she gained the summit of each acclivity in the road to catch a glimpse of him whom she so ardently wished to meet, until at length she began to fear that he must have passed the point where the lane entered the highway before she reached it; and a multitude of thoughts crowded upon her. Why had she been so careful to hide from every eye the fact that she felt for him, when others had treated him with marked kindness and attention? why had she been so reserved—so cold—so apparently heartless! when others were not ashamed to shed tears at his departure—why had she kept the sweet fountain

sealed and even allowed him to grasp her hand without the return of a friendly pressure? She knew not why it had been; but of one thing she was certain—it was not for the want of that feeling which others manifested. If she could have done it without being noticed, she would have wept bitter tears.

"Why Miss Louise!"

Louise started; she had been deeply engrossed with her thoughts and was at the time, while ascending a hill, brushing away the flies that were trying to feast upon the lathered sides of her pony.

"Oh, Henry, how glad I am; I feared you had passed the lane, and I had missed you."

"Then you have come on purpose to meet me?" and Henry looked inquiringly at her, as though utterly at a loss to account for the motives of such a visit.

"Help me off, Henry."

It was too late to attempt any disguise, and Louise was resolved there should be none on her part. Between Henry and herself there should be no more reserve.

Henry's portmanteau was dropped at the instant, and his hands extended to her. She saw his bright eyes glistening as she threw herself upon his arm, and yielding to the pressure which had been accumulating upon her heart, broke forth into a flood of tears. Henry was much alarmed.

"What is it, Miss Louise? what have I done? what can I do? who has troubled you?"

Louise put her hand upon his arm and shook her head; it was the only answer she could then give him.

The storm in her breast had been long gathering, and in proportion to the force which had controlled it hitherto, was its violence when once released.

Sensible that the highway was not the best place for them under present circumstances, Henry led her into a copse of cedars that skirted the road, fastened Pomp, and selected a rock, upon which he begged Louise to be seated, and asked most earnestly if she would let him know what he could do for her.

"I want to say a few things to you, Henry; but first of all I want to hear you say that you forgive me for my coldness of manner towards you this morning."

"Oh, Miss Louise, do not say a word about that; please not to think of it for a moment. I assure you"——

"But say it—say you forgive me."

"Oh, certainly; I assure you, I have nothing to forgive."

"But you have thought of it—I know you have; yes, I know you have;" for Henry could not deny it, and fearing to give her pain by telling what he had thought and felt, made no answer. "But you say you have forgiven me, and I believe what you say. I did not then act as I felt; I did not wish those about me to suppose I had feeling for any one."

"But why so, Miss Louise?"

"Henry, you will please me by dropping the title you add to my name; it has never been agreeable to me, but especially is it unpleasant now. I have ventured, this morning, to do what many would call a bold thing, and for which I should be very much blamed; and all for the purpose, first of telling you that I was sensible of having done wrong, and asking you to forgive me, and then I wanted to tell you some things which I must commit to somebody whose friendship I can rely upon; and I feel more confidence in you than in any other human being—why I cannot tell, but I believe you are my friend. Oh, will you be to me a brother, and allow me to take a sister's place? I can help you, Henry, I have means at my command. You have been turned off destitute; now let me share with you what I have. And let me know all that you are going to do, and where you are going to live. I want you to tell me everything."

"Your kindness is very great; to be thought of by you, is more than I have dared to hope for. You cannot tell how I feel on account of what you have just said. I need nothing further to stimulate me on my way. It is true, I am without kindred; I have no friends to aid me in procuring a situation where I can sustain myself; I have no large supply of means. But I do not fear; I am willing to work, and I think I can find, in the city, employment more suitable for me, than that to which I should be held if I remain here. I need no other aid from you than the courage your words have imparted. But tell me, what can I do for you?"

"I will tell you, Henry, but not until this is settled first; you know I have wealth, or at least shall have it when at a certain age. I have more money than I need to spend; take

this purse, at least; it will make me feel happier—do, Henry."

She held it forth to him. Tears started from his eyes; he grasped the hand which held the little treasure; he knew that she was in earnest, and the reception by him of this token would give her pleasure, but his heart revolted.

"Do not chide me—Louise, dear Louise, but I cannot take it."

"Not after what I have said and done? I may not feel then, Henry, that you accept my offer to be a sister to you? I may not look upon you as a brother?"

"Oh, do not speak so; do not take such a meaning from my refusal. You have asked me to be frank with you, to tell you all; I will. I do not say you think so, but I know well enough that some persons have an opinion that I am not able to take care of myself, and that I never shall accomplish anything in the way of making a living.

"I cannot say how it will be, for I am about to seek a situation in a line of business different from any I have been engaged in, but I have no fear on my account. I have this morning declined a kind offer from your aunt, that I should return, and make her house my home, and that Mr. Thompson would no doubt assist me in some way. I declined it for the reason that I knew he had expressed the opinion 'that I am an effeminate boy, and will never make much of a man.' I hardly know what I am, Louise, but if I die in the attempt, I will throw myself on my own resources. And if I arrive at independence it shall not be by the aid of any who have ever known me. And now can you not enter into my feelings? Would you not, if in my place, act as I do?"

Louise looked at him with intense interest; she saw the color mount his cheeks, she knew he was much excited.

"I will say no more about it, Henry. I would not injure your feelings, nor do anything that would humble you in your own opinion. I cannot help feeling for you in your lone condition, because I am a lone one myself."

"Do not say so, dear Louise! Have you not relatives who treat you as their own child? Have you not wealth to make you independent, even should they forsake you?"

"I have wealth, Henry, that is true. But, oh! you do not know how utterly worthless it is to me!"

"I cannot understand why you should say so."

"You will, when I have told you more. You feel sad, I know, Henry, that you are left without father or mother. You are now on a sad journey, going to prepare a resting place for the body of your last parent. But, oh! Henry, if I could be in your place, how gladly would I give up all the property I may ever call my own! I would willingly exchange places with the meanest servant in the land, and work hard to the end of my days, could I thereby roll off the dark cloud that hides from me those who gave me birth. *My* father may have been the man who was hung a year ago! And *my* mother I may see, perhaps, in the poor wretch that is hooted at by the boys, and finds a shelter within a barn or beneath a stack of hay! Henry, I am a foundling!"

The poor girl was so exhausted by the excitement of her feelings, that the last sentence came forth in a whisper; and then, covering her face, gave vent to the agony of her troubled spirit. Henry was deeply affected; he laid his hand upon her arm.

"Dear Louise, what can I do for you?"

It was some time before she could reply—

"I will tell you what I wish you to do. I cannot remain where I am. My life is too irksome. I would rather die than remain in my present position!"

"Are not you aunt and uncle kind to you?"

"You forget, Henry. I have no aunt, nor uncle, nor cousins, nor relations of any kind. No one owns me. Kind! Oh! yes, they are kind; but their kindness cannot shield me from the trials to which I am exposed. It was not until the past year that I had any clear knowledge of my true situation, and then only by accident. I saw the will by which the property I shall have was bequeathed to me. I was called his adopted daughter. That led me to make decided inquiries, and I have learned the whole truth. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson are only relatives in name! I feel that I am doomed to misery. I wish to get away: I care not where. Any part of the world will be the same to me. I have felt a strange confidence in you, Henry; I have told you what I have never told to any other human being. Perhaps you think I am very bold to do so?"

Henry thought not of consequences. He had always been

partial to Louise; her confiding manner at the first of this interview had given him courage. Hope that she might possibly love him, for the first time awoke in his breast. He thought not of their youth; nor of the danger of forming such ties, with but little more than the experience of childhood. He thought not of her circumstances: her wealth, or her uncertain parentage, were disregarded alike. All he thought of was, that the beautiful and proud girl whom he had so long admired, had taken pains to meet him; had manifested an interest for him; was now weeping by his side, and looking to him as a friend and confidant! He was completely divested of what judgment he usually possessed, and without pausing to consider, made an earnest appeal to Louise that she would promise him, if he should succeed in his plans—if he should gain a respectable station in life—she would share life with him!

Louise was younger than Henry; but she manifested clearly that precocity which so distinguishes the female sex, especially as to the finer shades of feeling. Her thoughts had been intently occupied with the peculiarities of her situation for some months; and she had looked far ahead into the future of her being. Developments, she knew, might yet be made, that would be most humbling to her pride. Alone, she could, in some way, bear the worst. But to know that any connected with her in the relations she might form in life, should feel the blush of shame tinging their cheek on her account—*that* would be a trial she should never dare to risk. Her proud spirit revolted with horror from the fearful thought. She looked at him a moment, and then replied:

"Oh, no, no, no! Henry, do not let such a thought enter your mind. I love you, Henry! I am not ashamed to say it. I shall always love you. But no, no, no! never will I let you, by anything that I may say, think of such a step. No, Henry; no earthly object would induce me, with this curse resting upon me, to unite myself with one worthy as I believe you are and will be. Never ask it again. What I have asked of you, Henry, is that you would take the place of a brother to me. My wish is to get away as soon as I can from all those who have any knowledge of me, and I want your help."

"In what way, dear Louise, can I help you?"

"I cannot tell you now. And besides, I am detaining you too long; you have a long walk to take. I fear I have not thought of that enough already. Oh, Henry, I am very selfish! But will you meet me here in a few days? How soon will you return?"

"I have nowhere to return to, Louise! I never expected, when I parted with you this morning, to see you again, or at least for many years."

"Oh, I have forgotten all that! I forget everything but my own troubles; and I fear I have been very selfish in troubling you with a relation of my peculiar circumstances! Pardon me, Henry, and although I can never be to you any nearer than I am now, yet take this little token, and keep in mind that you have one friend, who will ever be ready to stand by you to the very last."

And as she spoke, she took from her finger a ring made of hair, fastened with a gold clasp.

"It is my own hair, Henry. And now, good bye."

"I cannot part from you so, Louise! I must know what I can do for you? I will do anything you request."

"I believe you would, Henry. But I see now that there would be difficulties in the way of your assisting me, which I did not think of before. When I need your help, I will call upon you. It will be a comfort to me that I can feel that there is one to whom I can go with perfect confidence. All I ask of you now is, that when you procure a place, I may have your address."

As brother and sister might have bade farewell, so did Henry and Louise. Their hearts were full of confidence; and to each there has been imparted something which has made their burdens lighter—at least, for the present. But this scene will never be forgotten by them; and in all the lights and shadows of their future life, it will have a place.

## CHAPTER IV.

When Louise separated from Henry, she did not at once gallop off for home. In fact, she felt in no haste to return. Her home was becoming distasteful to her, and never before did she feel so little pleasure in the thought of meeting the members of her family, although they had always treated her with much kindness. She could only think of *Henry* and of the scene through which she had just passed. He was nearer to her now than ever, for she had made a confidant of him in reference to matters hitherto a sacred secret with herself, or if known to others, never alluded to by them.

That Esquire Thompson and his wife knew the peculiarity of her situation, she was well aware; although not a word had passed between them and her on the subject. And possibly the elder daughters knew that she was not their true cousin, and may have understood somewhat concerning her past history; but Louise was never made conscious, even by the most distant hint, that they regarded her otherwise than as their own flesh and blood—their own cousin Louise.

The story of her life can be told in few words. When an infant of some few months old, she was found one morning within the front area of a house in New York, where lived two aged people of respectable character, but in straitened circumstances. In order to meet their expenses they had for some years boarded a gentleman who once had followed the sea, but having accumulated a competency, left his profession and spent his time in making the most of what he had earned, and by successful operations in lots and stocks had become a man of wealth. He was unmarried, and having no relatives that he knew or cared for, resolved to adopt the little stranger. A nurse was hired, and the old people handsomely remunerated for their oversight. The child survived all the hardships of its young life, and grew up in health and beauty; but without those endearments which most children experience. Her self-appointed father manifested as much interest as could have been expected; but as his heart had never been softened

by the power of parental feelings, it could not be effected by the mere adoption of one in whom he felt no interest but that excited by caprice or pity. As soon as she was old enough, she was sent to a boarding-school, which happened to be near the residence of Esquire Thompson, and as Capt. Lovelace, her reputed father, was on intimate terms with that gentleman, she was committed specially to his superintendence and that of his excellent lady.

There Louise spent all her time when not at school, and the title which she gave them of uncle and aunt was one which they adopted of their own accord; doubtless for the purpose of making the little orphan feel more free among them, and not so entirely alone in the world. When about twelve years of age, Captain Lovelace died and left by will the bulk of his property to her, appointing Esquire Thompson her sole guardian.

Louise had suffered some trials at school from the inconsiderate questions of her mates, which resulted in her determination to expose herself in this way no longer. She was now fifteen, and with a very determined will; when once her resolution was fixed it was not easy to change it. Mrs. Thompson, too, sympathized with the child, and suspecting the cause for her wishing to leave school, without closely questioning her on the subject, urged her husband to allow Louise to remain with them and attain what she yet needed to learn by her own efforts.

But Louise had not only a determined will; she was also possessed of the keenest sensibility. Her feelings were strong, and she was doubtless capable of the most ardent attachment, could her mind have been free from those suspicions which arose from the peculiarity of her situation. Acts of kindness and marks of attention were not properly appreciated by her. She doubted the motives from which they sprung; and, in general, found that pity was the moving cause. So she gave not her heart in return to any. Those tender emotions, which at her age so readily go forth to meet the love of relatives and friends and all who are ready to reciprocate them, were by her restrained; all kept back in fear and suspicion, cloistered within her own heart—with one exception.

Towards Henry she had always felt differently than to any

other whom she knew. He had not, probably, designed to show her any marked attention, but from various tokens which love unwittingly bestows on the favored one, she was very sure that he felt a sincere regard, and he too was peculiarly situated; especially was this the case on the morning when he had taken his farewell, and was a friendless orphan, cut loose to steer as he best could upon a wide, wide sea, his lonely bark. But we have made a long parenthesis while Louise has been sitting on her pony, and we must now follow her motions.

So long as she could see Henry upon the road she kept her eye fixed on him, and when no longer visible, she turned her horse's head towards home, and, suffering the reins to hang upon the pummel of his saddle, allowed him to walk at his leisure.

She had, however, gone but a few paces on the road when a woman emerged from the clump of cedars where she and Henry had held their interview, and came towards her. She was neatly dressed, although the materials of her clothing were of the commoner kind. Her mien was that of one who felt somewhat independent. She was well formed, her countenance rather pleasing, and as she came up to Louise a smile lighted it up.

"Good morning, my dear!"

"Good morning, Caroline. How do you do this morning?"

"Oh, I am blithe as a lark! You know I am always well. I love the free air and the early dew, and the woods and the pretty streams, and I keep close to them and they keep me well. But what made you ride so fast this morning, my dear?"

Louise blushed deeply, and, hesitating a moment, answered:

"Because I choose to."

"And why did you not go along with that youngster that your heart is with? You have been looking very wistfully that way—the way he was going."

"Because I didn't choose to."

"And what if Squire Thompson should hear that Louise Lovelace meets young men in the Cedar Grove?"

"Caroline Jeralman, I know of no right you have to be always crossing my path and having something to say about my affairs. If I did meet a young man and choose to

meet him again, it neither concerns you nor Esquire Thompson, nor any one else!"

"Except me!"

"I should like to know, Caroline, what right you have to blend yourself with me or my affairs in any way? you have done it before now, and I"——

"Yes, but!" exclaimed the woman, interrupting Louise, "you know it was always done for your good!"

Louise was silent for a moment. Her eye losing its keenness and the lids slightly drooping, while the crimson mantled her beautiful face and neck.

"It was for your good, you know it was, my dear. Didn't I know how you were troubled by the naughty schoolgirls; and didn't I tell them you had better blood in your veins than ever ran in theirs, be they who they might?"

"Caroline," said Louise, again lifting her eye and fixing it earnestly as she spoke—her tone of voice was much softer than before—"what do you know of me? How do you know what blood runs in my veins?"

"Oh, can't I tell when one is come of a good stock by their very look? Haven't I seen your dear little hand before now, and don't I know all the marks upon it?"

"Caroline, I don't believe in your fortune telling; that is all put on; nor do you believe in it yourself."

The countenance of the young woman, for she was not much past thirty, assumed a cast altogether different from that which it had assumed on her first appearance. There was no lightness in it, but a sad and earnest expression. And Louise continued:

"You know you don't, Caroline; and you know that before this you have made remarks of the same kind, when I knew you were in sober earnest. You have said that you knew more about me than any one else."

"Well, what if I did?"

"Why if you do, you are very wicked to keep me from that which I want to know above all things else."

"Sometimes it is well for us not to know. There is many a child that had better never known who were its parents."

Louise was deeply agitated. At one moment she was on the point of springing to the ground and falling at the feet of this woman who had so often, and in many different ways,

manifested an interest in her affairs, and had intimated that she possessed a knowledge of her which others had not, and with tears beg her to unfold the mystery of her birth, if she really knew anything concerning it. But she had not quite confidence enough in the perfect soundness of mind of this woman, although she had just told her that her conduct, at times, was merely assumed.

"If you do not know anything about me, Caroline, why is it that wherever I am, you always contrive to get near me? Why do you not let me alone? I tell you I will not bear it. I shall complain to Esquire Thompson, and he will have you taken up for a vagrant."

"I am no vagrant, Miss Louise Lovelace; I live in my own house; it may be small and rough, to be sure, but it covers me. And the food I eat in it is earned by my own fingers; it is simple enough, and poor enough sometimes, but I eat it without feeling that I am beholden to any one for it."

Louise sprang from her horse, and seizing the hand of Caroline, looked up at her with eyes suffused with tears.

"I have been unjust, Caroline, oh do forgive me."

"I do forgive you."

"And now here, do take this." And Louise pulled out her purse, "take it all, and you shall have more—oh, do take it, Caroline."

"No, no, no; not one cent from any one, much less from you; oh, it would burn like fire in my breast. No, no, no; I thank you, dear child. I never lay up anything against you, for I know your heart is better than your speech or your actions. But I want to say a few words to you: I saw that young man on the road, and I saw you riding in a way that made me suspect something was not right, and I watched you. I knew you always favored him; it is for your good, Louise," seeing Louise putting on a look of displeasure, "yes, I watched you, I saw you meet him, and you came into the clump of cedars, and I watched you there, and I heard all you said, and I am glad I did so. It will be of no use, you will not get away."

"Who shall prevent it?"

"There are more ways than one to prevent it; but one will be enough; it is only for me to let Esquire Thompson know of your design."

"How can he stop me? he is not my master."

"He is your guardian; he has power to keep you closely confined, if he pleases, and he has power to prosecute Henry Thornton, for endeavoring to entice away his ward, and he can put him in jail for it."

Louise was now deadly pale; there was, no doubt, some truth in what Caroline said; but the idea that any one had power thus to baulk her will, was too much for her proud spirit.

"And suppose he is my guardian; it is only over my property. The man who appointed him was not my father; he had no power to say who should control my will. I am *free* —I *will* be free. They may keep the property, but they shall not say what I may or may not do; I won't bear it."

And Louise burst into a passionate flood of tears. Caroline looked at her with strong marks of pity on her face, and waited until the first burst of feeling had subsided.

"Sometimes power over our money is the same thing as power over our persons; and so it is in your case, Louise Lovelace, for what could you do without money?"

"I can work; and that is what I intend to do. If you have overheard what I said to Henry Thornton, you must have learned that I intend to get away from all who know me; and I *shall do it.* I shall go down at once among poor people; I shall let myself out for wages, and then no one will know me; no one will care who were my parents. I shall hear no whisperings about who I am, and where I am from. I shall not be shunned by those who feel themselves high in life, and fear I may not be properly their equal. Let them keep the property, and guard it as much as they please; it can never do me any good; it can never shield me from cruel hints, and surmises, and guesses, and shrugging of the shoulders, and such torment of heart as no poor young creature ever suffered before. Oh, that I was dead, or had never been born." And Louise again gave vent to tears.

"The last wish is better than the first one; I suppose it ain't wrong to wish we had never been born; if it is, I do wrong most every day. But you don't know the world, Louise Lovelace; you don't know what a dreadful thing it would be for you, a poor young thing, to be away off among strangers and with no money to help yourself. But, letting

that go, you would not wish to see Henry Thornton put to trouble for your sake."

"No, I should be very sorry to be the means of putting any more burden upon him than he has already; and I think it would be very unkind in you, Caroline, to tell what you overheard while listening to our plans; and more than that, it was no plan of Henry's; he only assented to do what he could to aid me."

"It would not be kind in me to allow you to run yourself into such trouble as you have been laying out for; and now, if you don't give me your word of promise that you will give up your plan of going away, and that you will be a good girl, and go home and put these strange notions out of your head, I shall use means to stop it, anyhow."

The conversation was here interrupted by the sound of an approaching vehicle, and to the utter consternation of both parties, the gig of Esquire Thompson, which had been hidden from their view by the intervention of the rising ground at the foot of which they were standing, was seen approaching; he was just returning home after an absence of some days.

Louise was disturbed because, with all the impetuosity of her nature and her determined will, she had a fear of the man who for some years held her in rigid subjection. She had been weeping, and the marks she knew could not be at once effaced, and she also knew that he had a dislike of Caroline, and had expressed a wish that Louise should have nothing to do with her. Caroline was also aware of his feelings towards herself, and as he was a man whom many feared and few loved, she could not but be somewhat affected by his appearance under the circumstances.

Louise at once prepared to mount, and, with the assistance of Caroline, was just settled upon her saddle when the squire came up.

He was a large man, with bushy hair and dark thick whiskers, keen grey eyes and heavy overhanging eyebrows, which, with a scowl upon his brow, made altogether a severe countenance. Louise did not smile as she saluted him; she never did. He had become very disagreeable to her, and she would not express feelings she did not possess.

"Why is this, Louise? I thought you had already known

my will in reference to that woman? I wish no one of my family to hold converse with such a vagrant."

Louise looked steadily at him, but had no time to reply, for Caroline at once advanced towards the gig.

"I may be a vagrant, Esquire Thompson, in your estimation, because I live in a hovel, and do what I can to sustain myself there. But I am never beholding to you or yours; and as to my speaking to those who come across my path, be they yours or yourself even, there is no law against that, as I ever heard of, if I only speak civilly."

Not deigning a reply, and only answering her by a shake of his head, as much as to say, "I will see to you," he again addressed Louise—

"You are through, I suppose? Please gallop on towards home."

Louise had lost the fear which for a moment possessed her, and answered in a quiet, though distinct and audible tone—

"I am not quite ready, sir; I will be home in a few moments."

Without another word, he drew his whip and laid it heavily on her pony. The little creature, spirited and totally unused to such treatment, gave a furious bound, and before Louise could gather up the reins, her balance was lost and the poor girl thrown heavily to the ground.

Caroline made no exclamation, but flew in an instant to her, and sitting down, gently raised the body of the prostrate girl and supported her against her own breast; at the same time rubbing her temples and speaking in very soft soothing tones—

"Where are you hurt, my darling? where are you hurt?—tell me, tell me!"

But there was no reply; and the death-like pallor of that face, where the rich blood was always so freely playing, and the perfect stillness of every muscle and the dead weight which she felt her arms were sustaining, caused her to suspect at once that life had fled.

"Oh, you have murdered her! you have murdered her! and I will be a witness against you before man and before God! You have murdered the poor innocent, father—— helpless child, and they shall know it to whom she belongs if I have to die for it the next moment!"

The gentleman made no reply, for he was too greatly agitated at the result of his passionate and shameful act, to attend to aught else besides watching with intense interest the pale features of the lovely girl, who was lying helpless in the arms of the woman.

He had at the instant reined his horse to the fence, and springing from his gig, stood with one knee upon the ground, feeling the pulse, to see if life still remained, and when assured of that, trying to ascertain whether any of her limbs were fractured.

He was deadly pale and a tremor shook his whole frame. His anger was changed for guilty apprehension.

"Feel her lower limbs and see if anything is broken."

Caroline did as she was bidden, and on pressing the ankle, a slight groan escaped the sufferer.

"It's there," she said, "and it's a swelling; but her head must be hurt too, for she fell right on the back of it, and the ground so stony, too. Yes, here it is! I knew it must be—you poor dear creature! you've been shamefully treated; but this shan't be the end of it. You ain't so alone in the world as you think for."

The squire seemed about to reply; but, as if he thought best to say nothing that might aggravate matters as he was then situated, asked in a milder tone than he had yet used—

"Can we get her into the carriage, do you suppose?"

"The best thing we can do is to get her to a soft bed as soon as may be. My poor shelter is not far off. It is clean, and my bed is easy and clean too. And then the sooner you drive off and get the doctor the better; she might die before she could reach her home. It is all of three miles, or more."

As this did, under all the circumstances, appear to be the better course, the gentleman at once prepared to follow it. With the tenderest care they raised her in their arms and walked through the cedars towards the abode of Caroline. It was, as she said, not far off. There was a gentle descent from the road, and then a winding path, skirting a ravine, in which a streamlet could be seen through the branches, gliding along its rocky bed. Following this path for some rods, a fine spring lay before them, and close at hand stood the little

shanty. It was a rude structure of boards, but everything around it had a pleasant look. Morning-glories nearly covered one side of the building, and the branches of a large hemlock made a beautiful screen in front, besides affording an agreeable shade, where Caroline no doubt spent much of her time in favorable weather.

The inside of the house was clean, as Caroline had said, and white as the snow-drifts were the pillow and sheets upon which they laid the helpless girl.

Caroline at once began to use such simple restoratives as her establishment afforded, and, woman-like, seemed to know just what to do, and how to do; while the squire, with a sadder heart than he had ever known before, hastened away to procure medical aid. The injury which he had inflicted by his rashness might lead to very serious consequences, and even if the child should recover, if the circumstances became known, a violent prejudice would be excited against him in the public mind. All this made him very uncomfortable, in addition to what we may suppose were his feelings in reference to Louise. He was not a hard-hearted man, he would not intentionally have put her to any risk of life or limb; but unused to having his will questioned by any member of his family, and possessed of strong passions, he for the moment lost the due control of his reason and judgment. He was also somewhat disturbed by what Caroline had said in the excitement of the moment. He had for some time, from various circumstances, had his suspicions aroused as to her knowledge of the parentage of Louise, and should it be as Caroline had intimated, that she had powerful friends, it might materially interfere with his present arbitrary right to the disposition of her property. It was large, and being an enterprising man, he had many ways and means of making it subserve his own interests. Whatever were his reasons, however, he had taken a dislike to the woman, and would have adopted measures to drive her away if he could have found a fair pretence for so doing. But Caroline, although at times strange in her conduct and singular in her habits and mode of life, had made herself popular with old and young. Her countenance was prepossessing; her treatment of all who came to her little lodge was kind, and especially so to the young, who often, on afternoon holidays, made excursions to

visit her. She was also a neat seamstress, and could sew and darn more beautifully than any one in that vicinity. By these means she lived, and all who needed such work to be done, were glad to give it out to her. She was prompt to the promised time, and her charge always reasonable. Caroline would have been missed, and Esquire Thompson knew all this; but he now resolved to use what power he had to make her stay in that vicinity uncomfortable.

Caroline's simple expedients soon had the effect of restoring consciousness in some degree to the poor girl. There was first a deep sigh, and then a gentle "Oh dear!" escaped her lips, and these tokens stimulated the efforts of the kind-hearted woman.

At length, the bright eyes of Louise were gazing in wonder at the motions of her attendant, and looking around the room as though trying to find out where she was.

"Caroline!"

"Oh dear! I am so glad you know me!"

"Caroline, where am I? what ails me?"

"Oh dear, you've been hurt! But keep quiet; all will be well yet, I'm hoping. Can you tell me, dear, where it hurts you the most?"

"Nothing hurts me. Oh, don't!" Caroline had just then pressed her ankle as she was bathing it.

"I won't, dear. I won't press it again; but it swells fast."

"Caroline, where am I? Did I fall?"

"Oh dear, yes! Don't you remember how that wicked man struck your pony? But he will rue the day yet! You are here, darling, in the hut of the vagrant as he calls me. Don't you remember it? you've been here many a time before now. But here they come."

It was not, however, as Caroline supposed. For as she looked out she at once stepped from the house.

"Good morning, Caroline!"

"Oh, sir, I cannot see you now; there is a poor girl been hurt and she is lying in there, and I hav'n't a minute to spare. I came out to meet you because you are, may-be, a stranger to her, and I feared it might trouble her. But, perhaps you do know her: it's Louise Lovelace, the—the niece of Esquire Thompson. The squire is gone for the doctor,

and first, when I heard your step, I thought it was them; but I might have known they couldn't have got back yet. But, may be, you had better come in and see her."

The gentleman, without hesitation, walked in. He knew Louise, and perhaps felt that Caroline was not the most proper person to be left alone with one who had been injured so as to require medical aid.

There was certainly a brighter cast to the countenance of Louise as she recognized the person who followed Caroline into the room.

The gentleman was tall of stature, with a radiant countenance. It was smooth, fair, rather pale, but of a healthy look and an expression of great mildness; just such a countenance as one in pain, or sickness, or with sorrow at the heart, would like to look upon. As he addressed Louise, there was no affected softening of the voice; no whining tones, as though the speaker was intensely sympathizing with the sufferer. His words came out clear and manly, although far removed from harshness, and not loud. His manner was highly calculated to inspire the invalid with confidence; it was so free from any unnatural studied effort. And that Louise was thus affected, her appearance soon manifested.

He felt the injured ankle, and pronounced confidently that no bone had been broken. It was merely sprained, although he said it might be some time before she would be able to use her limb. The swelling on the head indicated a hard blow, but he thought it might soon be reduced by cold applications or leeches.

"I am sorry for your accident, my child, and would gladly stay longer, if I could in any way be of service to you. But your uncle will soon be here with the physician, and I see that Caroline is doing what seems to be proper."

"Can you not stay, Mr. Vernon?" said Louise, looking at him very earnestly.

"If I thought I could be of any service to you, I would stay certainly; or, if you desire it."

"I do desire it."

"Well, I will remain with you until your uncle comes with the doctor."

"Can you not remain after they come?"

"A slight flush passed over the gentleman's face, and a moment he hesitated to reply—

"Oh, yes! I can remain; but it will scarcely be necessary." And then smiling—"You know, too many doctors are quite as bad as too many cooks."

"But you are not a doctor."

"Oh, no! but enough of one to predict that you are not seriously hurt."

"It is not for that I wish you to stay, Mr. Vernon"——

If Louise was intending to say what she *did* want of him, there was no time then, for her uncle and his attendant were heard approaching with rapid steps along the little path.

There was no manifestation of any unpleasant surprise on the part of the gentleman who stood beside the bed, and was just then holding the hand of Louise; she having grasped his in her eagerness to have him stay.

But it was impossible for the squire to conceal the chagrin or displeasure which *he* felt; and as his first glance at Louise encouraged him to hope that she was not so much injured as he had feared, one cause of his uneasiness was removed, or greatly lessened; he was, therefore, somewhat elated. He hardly noticed the gentleman, obtruded rather rudely by his side, asking her questions and communicating with the doctor, and manifesting that deep interest which, as her uncle and guardian, he would of course be expected to feel.

Mr. Vernon—for we may as well call him by his name—very quietly relinquished his position. He had politely accosted the squire as he entered, and had shaken hands with the doctor, who met him with much cordiality; and he would at once have taken leave, but for his promise to Louise. He saw, likewise, that she was watching his motions as he stood near the door, and expressing, as much as she could by looks, her desire that he should remain. He had no intention of leaving, however, and although he plainly perceived that his presence was not agreeable to the squire, he was not a man to be easily turned aside from whatever course he thought at the time the right one.

The result of the doctor's examination confirmed all that Mr. Vernon had told Louise; and fully satisfied that he was

correct in his opinion, the doctor turned to Mr. Thompson:

"Perhaps a few hours' repose would be best, and then, I think, towards evening, squire, she could be easily removed to her home."

"Why not at once, doctor?"

"Oh, well, if absolutely necessary, I suppose she might; but a little rest, and perhaps a nap, might refresh her so that she would feel more like being moved? What say you, my dear?" addressing Louise.

"I think I cannot go now."

"Just so; you would like to rest awhile. What do you say, Mr. Vernon? You are a pretty good nurse."

"I should rather incline to your opinion, doctor; although I suppose her uncle is anxious to have her under the care of friends as soon as possible."

The opinion of neither of these gentlemen would have availed anything against the will of Esquire Thompson, if he had not feared an obstinate resistance on the part of Louise. The calm, yet decided manner in which she said "she could not go," assured him that there would be great reluctance on her part, and he wished, if possible, to heal the breach already made. A little yielding on his part, and a few kind words, he thought, would accomplish that. So he appeared to acquiesce quite pleasantly, bade her cheer up, said she would soon be better, and smiling, added—

"The next time you must keep a tighter rein upon your pony;" and then, turning to Mr. Vernon: "I suppose it will be best for us all to leave her now, under the care of Caroline, who seems to be a good nurse."

Mr. Vernon did not take the hint, however; he had promised Louise to remain: for what reason she wished it, he knew not; having nothing to conceal himself, he never wished to encourage concealment on the part of others, especially in one situated as Louise was towards her uncle. So stepping up to the side of the bed on which she lay—

"You hear what your uncle wishes, Miss Louise? That we should all leave you. You expressed a wish that I should remain, and therefore I have done so. Had you not better assent to the proposition, that you be left in quiet, in order to get rest, preparatory to your removal?"

"After I have seen you alone."

Indignant as the squire was, he thought it best to say nothing then, and with no very comfortable feelings, left the cabin, inwardly resolving that things should not thus long remain.

## CHAPTER V.

The funeral ceremonies are over. Henry has stood by the open grave, and has seen the coffin lowered into its narrow house; and when the mourning family of Mr. Langstaff filed off through the narrow path of the churchyard, he remained and watched the laborers as they shovelled in the dust with which the sacred relics were in time to mingle. The grave is filled up, the little mound above covered with greensward, and then the men depart—their task accomplished; and now he is alone. Alone, except his good old friends, the Malcolms; but he can weep before them; they can weep too—not so much for the dead as for the living—for they have feeling hearts, and they think of that lone boy by the grave of his mother, and his last earthly relative.

And then they take him by the hand, and silently walk on their quiet way to the mill; and when in their humble home, he is made to feel that he is welcome; and they try to cheer his heart, and to throw little streaks of sunshine, so far as they are able, upon the dark cloud that has gathered over him.

The evening had come. The mill had done its work for the day, and Mr. Malcolm had taken his seat on the broad, low piazza which ran in front of his dwelling. His pipe, the constant companion of his leisure hours, was throwing off its wreath of smoke; while his good old partner, with her knitting still in hand, sat within speaking distance, but far enough off to be out of reach of the tobacco fumes. "She did not fancy tobacco," she said, "in no way."

Henry took a chair between them, and for a time the little company seemed to be absorbed each in his and her own thoughts.

"I have been thinking, sonny," said Mr. Malcolm, addressing Henry, "a good deal, since you told me all about your situation. It ain't in no wise right, as I view it, that you should be thrown clean out of all your mother had. That man must have got a pretty little property by her! It's a thousand pities she hadn't fixed things a little afore she

married him! But women, in general, don't think enough about such things. They seem to think men are angels, and can't do *them* no wrong, any how."

"You hadn't ought to blame them for that, pa:" Mrs. Malcolm always gave this title to her husband.

"I don't blame them; but they are to be pitied—they are so dreadfully took in sometimes."

"Men ought to know better. Women, in general, don't like to be bargaining with a man they are going to marry. They think he means all he says, and they don't want to have him suppose that they are afraid he will not be as good as his word."

"I suppose that is so, mammy; but it's a pity, if it is so, that they should be so took in as they be! But, as I was saying, it has been on my mind a good deal about our boy here. He is too young to be flung off, all living alone upon the world; and then, too, he has been brought up delicate like."

"Oh, Mr. Malcolm, I do not feel delicate, I assure you; I am strong enough to work; I have done as much work, this past year, as the best of them of my age."

"You don't, though! He didn't put you to rough and tumble?"

"I did everything that the rest did. Oh, sir! I don't wish you to think I cannot work, or that I shrink from work; I can do anything in that way that one of my age can."

"Glad to hear you say so; that's half the battle, already. You have got the spunk, I see, and that will go a good ways, Henry; I tell you, it will."

"That may be, pa," said Mrs. Malcolm, resting her hands a moment upon her lap; "but there's many kinds of work, and I guess the child wants to know which he had better go at. Farming, you know, is a good business—good enough for anybody, and a safe one, too; but then a body wants to have some little property to start on. If he had a father, now, who could help him, when come of age, to buy a little land, and give him a little setting out; or if there was anything a-coming to him when he was twenty-one; that he might go and buy a place with, even if he did not pay for it all at once—that might do; but, you see, he ain't got nothing."

"You are right, mammy," and then turning to Henry—"You see what she says about farming is true enough. A body wants something to start on. It is a plaguy hard tugging, when you have to begin, after you come of age, to go and work out by the month, and save, may be, a hundred dollars a year. It takes a good many years to get enough together to make a start on! But some do it, though. It wants a good constitution to stand the racket. You see, working out for wages, is clear another thing from working for yourself. To earn your wages, you've got to go from sunrise to sunset, and no 'Whoa' without it rains, and then, if he's a tight man, he'll find something or another to do."

"I have thought of all that, Mr. Malcolm, and therefore it seems to me that I shall stand a better chance in the city than in the country, if I can only get a place there."

"You ain't no acquaintance, nor nothing, there?"

"No, sir."

"Then that's a pity, too! It's plaguy hard, working one's way alone so, without some one to boost a little at the starting. A body wants some one in the city that is knowing to all the crooks and turns there, or he's like to fare hard."

"You tell him, pa, what you know about things there."

"Were you ever there, Mr. Malcolm?"

"Not long."

"In business?"

"Well, a little, just to say I was; that's all. I soon got enough on it; it had like to have swamped me. My experience ain't of much consequence, no how, only for this—I can say as much as this: A man who goes there, if he has got any bait about him, will have more fish a nibbling around him than he cares to catch."

As Henry looked very earnestly at Mr. Malcolm, the old gentleman was constrained, though apparently much against his will, to go on and explain matters.

"You see, my boy, money is the great thing in the city; if a man ain't got any, or no way of getting it, he can't stay there long, that's certain; and if he has, there are so many critters there a living by their wits, as they call it, that one has to keep a plaguy sharp lookout or he is bamboozled in less than no time; that's my experience and it cost me five hundred dollars to get it."

"But pa, you wasn't acquainted with the ways there."

"You see, Henry, when I was come of age, and began to think of settling down at some trade or other for life, my father wanted me to keep on jogging after the old hoppers; but I had no notion to it, I thought there was better business a going somewhere else; at any rate, I wanted to try.

"Well, my father was pretty forehanded in those days, so he gets together a thousand dollars and off I goes. Good bye to the old mill; mean to be a rich man and live as well as the best of 'em. So I made tracks for York. I knew some young fellows there and they soon made me acquainted with more, so that I was at no time at a loss for company. That was all well enough as far as it went, but it wasn't a helping me on any in the business I went there to do."

"What business had you learned, Mr. Malcolm?"

"Milling! that's what I had learned, and nothing else."

"Oh, sir, I ask your pardon; I thought you went to the city to go into some particular business."

"Nothing particular; I thought from what I heard folks say, that it would be the easiest thing in the world for a man to make money there, if he only had a little capital to work with; and so I thought I would try my luck with the rest. So down I went, and there I staid, week after week, looking out for something to take hold on, but couldn't see anything that looked reasonable. Well, one day as I was going along the street, I saw a red flag out and people going into the place; so in I goes, too; I soon found out what was going on: it was a vendue. It seems a man had failed, or so they said, and all the things were to be sold whether or no. Thought I, here's a chance. There was chairs, and sofas, and tables and carpets, and what not, and all seemed bran new, and so they was. Well, they began. The man with a little hammer in his hand kept his tongue a-going faster than any mill clapper. Things, he said, was going at a shameful price, not half the cost and some not a quarter. But, says he, 'I shall sell them, bring what they may.' All to once it struck me, if it was as he said, and he seemed to speak truth, he was so in earnest, it might be a chance for me to do something. So at it I goes, and when once I got a-going my blood began to get up, and when they bid against me I'd bid back again; if they were cheap for them, they were cheap for me. Well,

after a while they got through. Them that hadn't bought anything went out, and them that had walked up to the desk to get their bills, and pay the shot.

"'You've made a great bargain to-day, sir,' said the man with the little hammer.

"'Glad to hear it,' says I; 'it's what I've been looking for some time.'

"So he handed me my bill; it come to over four hundred dollars. Well, I up and paid it, and he thanked me, and bowed very politely; and then he said, will you send for the things this afternoon, or shall we send them to your place of business? All to once I see I'd been too fast; I'd gone and got a heap of things and no mortal place where to put 'em. What was I to do? So says I, 'can't you let them be where they are for a day or so, just to give me a chance to dispose of 'em?'

"'Not very conveniently,' said he, 'for we shall have another auction here to-morrow, of the same kind of goods, and these things will be in the way.'

"'Oh,' said I, 'I thought the folks had failed here.'

"'Oh no,' said he, laughing, '*we* have not failed, but the owner of the goods you bought; if it will be any convenience, however, to you to keep them here, until to-morrow or next day, you can do so.'

"'Thank you, sir,' said I, and off I goes. First I called on all the folks that sold cabinet ware; but there wasn't one of 'em would even go to look at the goods, and what was worse than all, one of them, who seemed to be a clever sort of a man, told me some things that made me feel rather oneasy; says he, 'you bought that furniture at auction?'

"'I did so; a man had failed and they had to be sold. I see he smiled when I told him that, and then he says, 'Friend, the best thing you can do is to let the man you bought them of sell them again at auction on your account; the goods are only fit to be sold in that way, they were made expressly for it.' 'Thank you,' said I, 'I guess I will take your advice,' and so I did; they were sold, and two hundred dollars went for that job. Well, thinks I, this ain't making headway very fast; I guess I will see what I've got, and make tracks back again to the old mill, when, as luck would have it, a fellow that I had got acquainted with, met me in the street and says

he, 'Malcolm, I've a grand chance to make a fortune now, if I could find a fellow who had five hundred dollars, and who would join me.'

"'What's the business?' says I.

"'The liquor business.'

"Liquor business! Well, I didn't like the name of it very much, but thinks I, though I never drink any myself, other folks do and will, and I may as well make a fortune out of it as any one; so I says—I'm your chap. 'Done,' says he; and then he went on to tell what a glorious stand he could get, and all that. 'Get it then,' says I, 'and let's be a doing something, for what with one thing, and what with another, I ain't a gaining ground very fast.' Well, he took me to the stand, as he called it, hired it, went to work painting, and fixing, and making things look as nice as a new fiddle; it took a deal of money though to do that, and sometimes I was afeared there would be nothing left but the fixings to start on.

"But after a while we got all rigged up, kegs painted and lettered, glasses and decanters all shining behind the counter, and we opened shop, and sure enough, it was as he said, a first rate stand."

"And you made money, Mr. Malcolm?"

"I will tell you; I stood behind the counter there, for a little over two weeks, from early in the morning until late at night, and sometimes most to next morning.

"At last, early one morning—I got up early, for I hadn't slept any that night—the customers hadn't begun to come in yet—my partner was there. Says I, 'Jim,'—his name was Jim—'Jim,' says I, 'what will you give me and let me clear out? I am kind of homesick.'

"'You are joking,' says he.

"'No, I am in sober earnest.'

"'Why we are doing well, ain't we?'

"'We are doing considerable business,' says I.

"'And it is a good business, ain't it? It is all cash, and profits nearly double; two years such trade, we can both be rich.'

"'Don't doubt it,' says I, 'but what will you give me cash down, and let me off?'

"'I will give you three hundred dollars; but you had better not quit.'

"'I will take it,' says I; 'it's a bargain.'

"He got the three hundred dollars somewhere, in a short time, and we squared all matters between us. 'Now,' says he 'Malcolm, you are a fool; you are throwing away the best chance a man ever had.'

"'Jim,' says I, 'I love money as well as most people, but if I cannot make it without serving the devil, as I've been a serving him for the last two weeks, I had a little rather be without it.'

"'What do you mean?' says he

"'I mean what I say,' said I; 'I don't pretend to have any more religion than I ought to have; a little more might be of advantage, it could do me no harm; but Jim,' says I 'there ain't money enough in this city to hire me to stand behind that counter and deal out liquor for two years to come, to them poor, miserable, distressed critters, that are consuming their very in'ards with the nasty stuff; and that ain't all. Why don't you know yourself, it is just like being in—in the bad place itself. Nothing but cursing and swearing, and the vilest talk that a decent man ever listened to. No, no,' said I, 'I don't want no fortune that's made in this way. I can't sleep o'nights now, and I want no money earned by such means.' So I took my three hundred dollars and went and got into the boat for Maple Cove. And that is all of my experience in the city; but all you can learn from it, I guess, is this, that before a man tries to do business on his own account, he must learn the crooks and turns in it. And there is another thing I can tell you from what I have seen there; it is this, that a man or boy is to be on the jump day or night, when business calls. They don't keep noon marks there, where a man can throw down his hoe and go to dinner, whether his row is done or not. But it is my opinion that if a boy or young man gets into a place, if they are any kind of decent folks, and he is true and faithful, and keeps his mind on his business, and does his best to do right, and to please, that he is most sure to do well and creep up, and that pretty fast too sometimes; but it all depends, as I take it, upon himself."

Henry listened very attentively to the recital of Mr. Malcolm, and, although the experience of the old man was rather

imited, yet Henry caught a few ideas which he meant to bear in mind.

The next morning Henry was up bright and early, and as soon as breakfast was over he accompanied Mr. Malcolm as far as the mill, being on his way to visit a spot he longed much to see. When about to separate from the old gentleman, the latter laid his hand on Henry's shoulder:

"Now, my boy, I want you to feel entirely welcome to spend some days here; you want a little time to rest yourself, and think over all what you mean to do. It's better in general for us to look well round about, upon matters, and to look as far ahead as we can; but it ain't much we can see in that direction, anyhow. A man might most as well have his eyes shut, for all that he can see ahead of the road he is to travel through life. My opinion is, though, that he should look well all around him before he starts, and make up his mind as to which direction he means to go, and then keep moving on, track or no track, climb over the hills, wade through the streams, push aside the brambles and brushes, and keep a-going; he will come out into daylight somewhere, see if he don't; so you must not be in any hurry about starting right off, we will all consider about what is best to be done, and then you can go and try to do it. And now go and take your walk, but mind and be back to dinner."

"I will, sir."

As Henry walked off with a sprightly step, the old man stood and watched him a moment.

"He is a comely young fellow; how straight and manly he holds himself; well put together, but not quite rugged enough to follow the plough, or swing the scythe. He has got an eye, though, that looks as if he had a power of life in him. I guess there is grit too, mild as he seems.

Mr. Malcolm's opinion of Henry was, perhaps, correct. He did not, indeed, appear well fitted for the rougher labors of life, although no doubt he might become inured to them. Many a delicate frame has made intense efforts, and borne up under protracted struggles, when more robust and apparently hardier men have drooped and perished.

Henry was, however, less fitted in mind for the severe drudgery of life, than was his person. He had a peculiar fondness for that which was beautiful; all the little refine-

ments of life he had ever clung to. He never seemed to feel at ease in a rough or unsightly garb, nor in any company where coarse manners or coarse language were indulged; and as the few male companions he had were of that class, he was of necessity driven to the society of the softer sex. To them he had the power of making himself peculiarly agreeable: it seemed to be a natural gift; with them he felt at home, and perhaps their tender influence had given a tone to his feelings and a gentleness to his character, which some mistook for effeminacy, and therefore looked upon him as an enervated youth, fit only to be a pleasant companion in the party circle. But underlying these external manifestations was a depth of feeling and strength of character none had as yet fathomed. He was painfully sensitive in regard to his independence: he wished, by his own exertions, to earn the bread which he ate, and to be clothed by the means which his efforts should command; he was sensitive to a degree against asking a favor, and acts of kindness would often cause the blood to tinge his cheeks, as though it was a crime in him to accept them.

There was a diffidence, too, in his nature, that made him shrink from obtruding himself among those to whom he could not be sure his presence was welcome; and the same feeling caused him, at times, to dread being thrown into the crowd of a city: he could have wished to spend his life with a few chosen friends.

He was not naturally courageous. The dark thunder-cloud always attracted his notice; to him it seemed a messenger of evil. The rushing of the strong wind, and the tumult of the bursting tempest, would blanch his cheek and fill his heart with dread; but no word would escape his lips, nor would he hesitate, if bidden, to meet the fury of the elements and expose himself to their violence. Deep within he smothered what he knew might make him a subject of remark or ridicule, and his pride and natural energy enabled him to face that from which he would otherwise have been disposed to shrink.

That a new phase of character was developing since the death of his mother, we have seen: his bearing before him who should have been a father, but who Henry felt had acted the part of a petty tyrant; his resolute departure from the

place which had been his home, and where he was fully entitled to a shelter, and throwing himself upon his own efforts, are certainly some evidence that his self confidence is not destroyed, although hitherto it may have been obscured.

With this declaration of his peculiarities, our readers will be now able, as we trust, to appreciate his situation, and follow him with interest through his lone path amid the entanglements and vicissitudes of life.

As Henry drew near the spot to which his steps had been directed, his pace became more slow and his thoughts more sad; every rock and tree awoke reminiscences of him upon whose hand he had rested when a child, as he jumped from rock to rock, or across some slight ravine which the summer showers had excavated. All he had then enjoyed, and all he had since suffered, came back with overpowering freshness.

At length he has climbed a dilapidated stone fence, and set his foot upon the soil which was once "their Cedar lot:" not his now, except that his heart claimed an interest which no alienation by deed of sale can affect.

The turf was closely cropped, for a flock of sheep was grazing on the lot; but the soil was apparently of a better quality than any he had passed over. Here and there upon the rolling surface a huge rock would protrude a little above the turf; and scattered in clusters throughout the inclosure were flourishing cedars, perfuming the air with their fine aroma, and giving a picturesque appearance to the locality, which can only be appreciated by one whose early taste has been formed where those rock-loving trees abound.

To Henry it was the perfection of beauty. The site was somewhat elevated, and the grounds, for some distance, uneven; a little broken at spots, but for the most part in slopes that gradually diminished towards the east, where they finally jutted upon the waters of the Sound, which flowed thither in a fair, wide stream, gracefully sweeping close to the feet of the rocks, and then off again into the marsh which spread between the eastern and western headlands. Far as the eye could reach, on either hand, a fair view presented itself; hill-tops, varied with the green turf and clusters of maple and cedars; rocky eminences, through whose fissures protruded evergreens of small size, but large enough to redeem them from naked barrenness; while, occasionally, broad, rich fields

and towering woods told of a deeper soil and greater luxuriance than was visible around the immediate locality where he then stood.

The crowning beauty of the scene, however, was the vast sweep which the eye could compass, as it turned from the land to the water view. No sheet of water in our beautiful country presents such varied attractions to the eye as that of Long Island Sound. There is not, indeed, the majesty of the ocean; nor can the thoughts lose themselves in a boundless sea and sky. There is not the long swell of the mighty wave, nor the deep rumbling of their breaking billows; but there is breadth sufficient to fill the eye, and the blue hills and headlands form delightful boundaries upon which the sight can rest and be refreshed. And then there is the calm of the morning; the mists curling up upon the land; the vast mirror upon which the rising day sheds his glowing beams, the gentle breeze breaking its smooth, amber surface into cerulean blue, and the tempest whitening the whole area with silvery spray; while, from early morn to nightfall, the white sails of our neat coasting craft are ever to be seen ploughing their way through sunshine and storm.

Here Henry had taken his first lessons in scenery. He could not have told why he loved it so, but it always exercised a powerful charm over him; and now the feelings of the past blending with the present, chain him with a magic spell; he turns his eye from hill to hill; he looks upon the glossy plain far. far away; he hears the chirping birds, and the sound of the boatman's oar: and all bring back thoughts and feelings that for awhile pressed upon his young heart heavily.

And now, as a reality he had not comprehended before, his present condition rose up to view.

He had, indeed, met with kindness from those upon whom he had no claim; but it was only that of hospitality to a friendless boy. No door was open to him as a home; no hand was extended that could aid him to a situation where his own exertions might avail; he must go far off among strangers, and work his way as best he might. He had often imagined how he would feel when left to struggle alone, should that be his fate, but imagination seldom brings out all the harsher features of the picture.

He sat down upon a rock, and for awhile reclined his head upon his hand; and then, as his thoughts grew more intense—as though weary of their action—he drew forth the little pocket-book that contained his small capital, and from one of its cells took a piece of printed paper; he opened it, and began to peruse its contents. It was a passage of Scripture, which his mother had, in one of her conversations with him, while on her sick-bed, requested him to commit to memory; and for this purpose he had abstracted the leaf which contained it from an old cast-off Bible, and had put it thus carefully away that he might at leisure accomplish the task.

It was the third chapter of Proverbs. The little leaf seemed now a sacred relic, so connected was it with his mother's memory; and her request he resolved at once to attend to, as that of a dying wish.

Tears started as he looked upon the sacred words, hallowed now by their connection with that beloved being who had sought to do him all the good her helpless condition would allow. Perhaps she knew too well that her orphan boy would be cast upon the world, and the most she could then do, was to try and lead him to a source of trust, almighty and unfailing.

Henry read each word with most solemn interest; they seemed to him words from the spirit land. When he came to the fifth and sixth verses, his soul was thrilled with the rich, unearthly instructions therein contained; again and again he read them; he pronounced them with an audible voice, and as their precious injunctions and promises unfolded to his view, he seemed to hear the voice of his Father in Heaven, whispering to him in accents of mercy; telling him that there was an unseen hand stretched out, upon which he might lean, upon whose guidance he might depend, and whose protecting power would be ever near.

Henry had not been, in the strict sense, religiously educated. He had been taught to reverence holy things; he was, when very young, taught to say his prayers, and occasionally his mother had given him a hymn to learn.

All these might have had some influence—no doubt they had; but a counteracting impression had been made by the example which was conspicuously set before him in the life of his step-father.

He saw how scrupulous he was to observe all the outward decorum of the Christian worshipper, while the lovely emanations of the Christian character were never witnessed, either in word or deed, within the domestic circle. Sabbaths rigidly observed; the Bible regularly opened at stated times, and read aloud; the pew in the church always filled; family prayers formally gone through with. But the graces of patience, meekness, gentleness, sympathy, and domestic charity, were never exhibited to Henry's young, but observant mind. No wonder, then, if but little effect had been produced by his contact with Christian observances, when his heart was repelled by the points which they presented to his daily notice.

But Henry, happily, had not confounded the truth itself with the irregularities of some who professed to be governed by its precepts. The word of God was to him a pure fountain, although he may not have taken delight in reading it; he reverenced it as something connected with the eternal world, as a message from heaven, the revealer of unearthly mysteries.

But there is something more than reverence in his heart now, as he sits upon that rock amid the spicy cedars, holding in his hands that stray leaf, while his eye, beaming with unwonted brilliancy, is raised towards heaven.

"Yes!" he exclaims aloud, in the fervor of his joy; "I *will* commit—I *do* commit myself to thee, oh, thou Father of the fatherless! From this hour I will acknowledge thee in all my ways?"

We will not say that Henry had fully yielded up his heart in a covenant with God, as his Redeemer from all iniquity; or that the calm which pervaded his mind was a token of that peace which flows from a sense of reconciliation through the blood of Christ; but it was very nearly allied to it. He revived under its influence; he felt stronger than he had yet done. That oppressive sense of loneliness, which threw such a chill upon his heart, and spread such a mist about his path, he no longer felt. All about him shone with new radiance; every tree and shrub, the rocks, the greensward, the water, and the sky, spoke of a Father's power and presence; and in the fullness of his joy, he wept.

After thus, for some moments, giving vent to his feelings,

his mind was absorbed with two important subjects that claimed immediate attention. One was, "In what way or by what means could he maintain a steady reliance on the Divine Power?" and the other, "What decision should he come to, as to the course before him?"

In regard to the first the direction seemed plain; he could not be mistaken as to its meaning; again and again he read it:

"Acknowledge him in all thy ways and he shall direct thy steps!" *This he resolved to do.* Hereafter, from this hour, he determines that his first and last act on each day of his life should be a prayer for Almighty aid, and an acknowledgment of Almighty care. He resolves, in like manner, that the directions laid down in this chapter should be his guide in all his dealings with his fellow men and in his duty to him upon whose care he had thrown himself.

And whatever may be his lot, it is a blessed resolve he has made. He has grasped a strong staff, that will never prove false, for his support! He has placed his young heart under the influence of a set of rules which will defend it from many a bitter pang, and, if not to wealth, will most assuredly lead to peace of mind.

We feel easier on your account, thou young wrestler with the toils and snares of life. May you be kept within the hallowed influence of the guide you have chosen!

As to the way in which he should direct his steps, so far as his young judgment could decide, he concluded that the wiser plan for him was to go at once to the city of New York, where, if in any place, an opening might be procured for such work as he thought himself best fitted for; and in order to save as much as possible of his little fund, he determined to go there on foot. It would take him some days, and money was of more consequence to him now than time.

He had but just marked out his plans with distinctness and certainty, so far as his own mind was concerned, when the sound of some one whistling a pleasant tune attracted his notice; he immediately arose and prepared to retrace his steps towards the mill, when not far from where he had been sitting he beheld a youth, apparently about his own age. He was standing upon a spot a little more elevated than that

which Henry had occupied, and was intently surveying the fine prospect which the eastern view presented. Both looked surprised, for each was unconscious that any other human being was within hearing.

As soon as the young man saw Henry, he began to advance towards him, and Henry paused in his progress, which would have been in an opposite direction. Henry concluded at once, from his dress and bearing, that he was not one of the ordinary youth of that vicinity, and being himself naturally retiring, did not, on that account, make any further advance than what under the circumstances seemed to him to be civil. He paused, as has been said, and awaited his approach. The young man, as he drew near, with a very pleasant smile, said—

"Good morning; I believe we are both taken by surprise. I had no idea there was any one here but myself."

"Nor I," said Henry, his countenance also brightning into a smile.

"Do you live near this? Excuse me for asking, for I have been looking round some days to find an associate, and I have given it up. All the young folks seem to have gone off; it is the most lonesome place I was ever at."

"I suppose at this season they are all busy in the fields."

"Perhaps that is the reason; but I do not know what to make of the place. There are many nice looking houses; but all the men and boys I have met look so rough, and they seem to be afraid of me. I have tried to speak to one or two of them, but they are not at all inclined to be sociable;—stupid, are they not?"

"I am not, myself, much acquainted here, although it was once my home. I have been away for some years, and as I do not expect to be here but a day longer, I have not felt like hunting up acquaintances."

"Then you do not live here?"

"No; I am here merely on a visit."

"Then we are alike as to that; I came up from New York to visit some friends that live in this vicinity. The air is fine here, and some of the scenery is beautiful, but I must say I do not fancy the people."

"Perhaps, if you could stay long enough to become acquainted you might change your opinion. You must

remember this is a busy season of the year; all hands are at work, and all are in their working rig."

"But I should think that reason not a sufficient excuse for rough manners. Do you think they are ashamed of their work, or of their dress; or what is it?"

"I can hardly tell; but perhaps they inferred from your dress that you were from the city, and on that account thought you felt above them."

"Then they thought very wrong. You do not think so, I hope?" and the youth smiled very pleasantly as he said this, and Henry could not but notice what a fair, genial countenance he had, and felt, he scarcely knew why, quite at home with him.

"You have not, I must confess, made any such impression upon me. I expect, in a few days to be in the city myself, and should be sorry to entertain any such prejudice."

"You are going to the city! That is good! I am glad we have met, then. Have you ever been there?"

"I have not."

"Have you friends there?"

"No; I must make my friends when I get there."

"Come, then, let us take a seat, and have a good long talk together. Who knows but I may be one of them; I wish we might become acquainted."

Henry readily assented, for there was an open, easy, frank manner with the youth that pleased him, beyond that of any person of his own age he had seen in a long time, if ever.

It will not be necessary for us to follow them through the details of their conversation. They were both in the spring-time of life, and their hearts as yet unspoiled by contact with the selfishness of the world. They had neither of them any secrets which they were afraid should be known; they had no sinister ends to accomplish; they were mutually pleased with each other's appearance; and it was not long, as they thus sat, with nature in its freshness all around them, and the balmy summer air fanning their uncovered heads, unfolding to each other the story of their life and the prospects before them, ere they felt not only acquainted, but in the heart of one of them at least was engendered a strong attachment.

They were not alike in their circumstances, and perhaps

not peculiarly so in their natural temperament; but in open, ingenuous, frankness and honesty, in thought and expression, there was apparently but little dissimilarity.

Henry soon learned that the name of his companion was Evart Marston; that his father had been dead some years; that his mother was still a widow; and he formed the opinion that the young man was rich, though not from anything which was said directly on that point, but he kept his own horse and gig in the city to ride out with at his own pleasure, and his time seemed to be very much at his own disposal.

Henry had also told what he thought proper of his own situation, having no reluctance to let it be known that he was poor and expected to depend for his living on his own exertions, and it seemed to excite in his companion a deeper feeling of interest for him.

"And now," said young Marston, starting up, "I must leave you for the present, for my friends will not know what has become of me. I believe we know all about each other; I am so glad we have happened to meet. You will come and see me as soon as you get to the city? You will remember the street—Cortlandt street, No. —?"

"Oh, certainly, I will call upon you! but it may not be very soon; you know my first business must be to find a situation."

"Oh, but I want you to come straight to my house. I want you to come and stay there, and we will have some fine rides together, and I will show you all the sights. You know you will need, first of all, to get a little acquainted with the city, and to see all that is to be seen; and then, you know, you can take your time about getting a place. Places enough, no doubt. Sometimes I have thought of going into a store myself, just to learn business a little; and may be we can get into the same store; that would be nice!"

And so they parted, cordially shaking hands, as friends might have done who had been intimate for years. Henry noticed at a distance, upon the highway, as he was returning to the mill, a horse and carriage tied to the fence, and soon he saw his new friend jump in and drive off, in the opposite direction to that he was going.

## CHAPTER VI.

Off, at last, on the wide world! A stranger to its ways, and as yet a stranger to its wonderful vicissitudes. Henry has started! He is not cheerful; for he has just bade adieu to the last persons he can call friends, and in the long road before him there is no expectation of meeting with those whom he had ever known. There is no path marked out for him by any upon whose judgment or experience he can confide. He expects to meet no kind counsellor of whom he can ask advice. He has no spot to which in an extremity he can resort, and shelter himself as in a home. The truth in all its nakedness and power has never been quite so fully realized, as when he finds himself beyond sight of the old mill, and with his small portmanteau in hand, on a road he had never travelled. He has still, however, good courage, he walks at a brisk pace, faster than is expedient for a journey, but it is natural for him; he will learn before the day is through, better how to regulate his speed.

It was not the best kind of a day for labor; the air was sultry, and although the sun's rays were obscured by light clouds, a circumstance upon which Henry had congratulated himself at his first start, yet he soon found the heat oppressive, and there was a dingy hue to the atmosphere, through which distant objects were beheld, that spoiled the beauty of the scenery, to whichever side of the horizon the eye was directed. The roads were dusty, and as every vehicle which passed left a cloud behind it, which the wind refused to bear away, the particles would long be floating by the roadside where the footpath ran, until they settled upon the grass and shrubs, and trees, and the foot traveller too.

Up hill and down—long, long hills, up which it had been useless to attempt to make speed—they must be surmounted by a steady, moderate step, and on the way, where a rock was handy, a few moments' rest was by no means unwelcome; and then long level tracks, that pained the eye, they seemed so endless. The noon at last arrived, and Henry en-

ters a tavern and seeks repose upon the long bench of its piazza. He is not hungry, for he has eaten some biscuit which the kind friends from whom he parted in the morning had supplied him with; at the well he quenches his thirst—he shakes the dust a little from his clothes—asks how many miles to the next tavern, and goes on his way. He has not rested as long as he ought, but his mind begins to be uneasy, his thoughts are not pleasant, faces are all new to him, and although he does not expect, by going on, to meet with those he ever saw before, yet he feels better when in motion than at rest; at any rate, he does not trust himself to think, and thoughts can be kept at bay better when on the way than sitting in a strange house, and hearing strange voices—they remind him too forcibly of his desolate condition.

Twelve miles he had yet to go over when he left this stopping-place, and he found, long before half that distance was accomplished, that he had misjudged his own ability. Every hill began to wear a forbidding aspect, nor was the long road which his eye could travel much less so; his pauses to rest were more frequent, but the relief gained of short duration; his feet, too, began to trouble him; both had become swollen and painful, and at every rest he allowed himself, the difficulty at starting was more obvious. His great anxiety however, to accomplish the distance he had proposed urged him forward. As the day began to wear away, and while yet some miles from the anticipated place of rest for the night, the signs of an approaching storm became very marked. It had thundered occasionally through the afternoon, and now dense clouds were heaping up in the west. Henry could not keep his eye from them—a thunder-cloud at once cast gloom upon his mind—he could not see in it the appointed means for relieving the burdened atmosphere, and bringing a pure air and bright skies. It was rather to him a token of wrath and some fearful coming evil; he saw that the clouds gathered slowly, but still they were spreading and growing darker, and heaping up in heavier masses, and he urged his speed. Five miles, he learned from one he had just met, intervened before he could reach the next tavern, and all the dwellings which occasionally he passed were not such as he felt free to ask shelter in, although, doubtless, not one of them but would have freely afforded it to a weary boy. They were of

the finer class of buildings, far back from the road, with lawns spreading before them, and fine avenues by which they were approached, and some of them a mile off at least, perched upon some headland of the Sound. The evening was at hand, or perhaps the dark mantle which obscured the sun caused him to think so—he could not tell the hour, nor could he tell whether the sun had really set, or whether the shadows which were falling on the earth were those of the coming storm. How far he had walked since he last inquired the distance, he knew not; he had made all the speed possible, but was conscious that the way seemed very long, and as he surmounted the summit of a hill and saw before him a long stretch of road, hiding itself in a heavy wood, and no dwelling in sight but one, and that in keeping with those he had passed, his heart grew very sad; and the deep roll of heavy thunder, preceded by the first flash of lightning he had seen, told that the storm was indeed near at hand. He sees a traveller approaching, and he is driving with speed, doubtless hastening to some sheltering home. Presently he stops, and is about to enter the avenue which leads to the mansion just mentioned; the beautiful gate is thrown open, and the obedient horse walks through, and stops until his master shall have closed the portal—a moment the gentleman pauses and casts a careless glance at Henry—Henry is near enough to perceive that he may well be the owner of the mansion, for his dress and the establishment in which he rode were in keeping with the fine fences and elegant appearance of the whole premises. He was tall and well built, and as Henry caught the glance of his eye, he thought he had never met a more piercing gaze, and an apparent scowl upon his brow caused Henry for the moment to feel that it would not do for him even to venture a question as to the distance he yet was from the tavern, but prompted by that spirit of politeness so natural to him, even dirty and tired as he was, he touched his hat without speaking.

"Good evening, sir."

The tones of the voice were so in contrast with the look, that Henry at once responded to the salutation; touched his hat again, slightly raising it, and slackened for a moment his pace. The gentleman advanced towards him.

"Whither bound, my young friend?"

"I am trying to reach the tavern. Can you tell me, sir, how far I am from it?"

"You are three miles from it. Do you know the people there? are they friends of yours?"

"Oh, no, sir; I was never here before."

"Travelling, eh! Not run away, I hope?"

"Oh, no, sir. I have no one to run away from."

"No father?"

"No, sir."

"No mother?"

"No, sir."

Henry's usual manner was to speak quickly, but now the last question, in his wearied condition, almost overcame his power to answer. He was obliged to do it quickly or not at all. The gentleman perceived his emotion, and began himself to be disturbed; his heart was not as stern as his gaze.

"I tell you what it is, my young friend, you cannot reach the tavern, do your best, before the storm will overtake you; and I should judge from your appearance you have walked far enough already, and more than that, our taverns in these parts are no very likely places to put up at. Come, if you have no objections, jump into my carriage, and I'll give you a better shelter for the night."

"Oh, sir, I thank you much; you are very good; but"—and Henry looked at his garments, covered with dust, as though he were hardly fit for decent company. The gentleman, however, anticipated his objection.

"Never mind your *but;* you will find your dress no hindrance to a welcome. You have learned good manners, and that is of more consequence than fine clothes. Come, jump in, for the storm is approaching rapidly."

In a moment more Henry was riding behind a noble horse, and in a finer vehicle than he had ever been seated in. Swiftly they passed through the curving avenue, lined with majestic trees, and at intervals, through the branches, a glimpse only of the mansion could be had. The gentleman drove fast, for the signs of the bursting storm were becoming every moment more portentous. He had time, though, before reaching the house, to learn from a few questions much of Henry's history and the object for which he was thus travelling alone and on foot.

The scene at the house was somewhat calculated to abash our young traveller; for on the ample piazza was quite a collection of ladies, old and young, richly dressed, and with an eye fixed on the young stranger. All embarrassment was immediately removed by the peculiar reception awaiting him, the moment an announcement could be made as to the purport of the visit. There was a welcome beaming from every face, besides the outspoken one by the mistress of the mansion.

"You have had a dusty walk, sir," she said, as she took his hand, "and I think you must be very tired. Here, Randolph!" and a lad of about twelve years came quickly up—"show this young gentleman into the south room of the north wing—the room next to yours."

"I will, with pleasure."

And then, addressing Henry, "You may consider that as your room for the night; and do you see, Randolph, that he has water there; and when you are rid of your dust, and feel a little refreshed, we shall be happy to see you among us. But I expect you will not feel very comfortable until you get a good cup of tea. Mr. Marston tells me your name is Thornton."

"Henry Thornton, madam."

"Henry is it? Well, I like that name; and shall I call you Henry or Mr. Thornton?"

"Oh, Henry if you please, madam."

"Well, Henry, now make yourself at home. My son will wait upon you to your room, and let us have your company as soon as possible."

The moment Henry had disappeared there was quite a little gathering around the lady. First, the gentleman himself, who had just come up, after giving his horse in charge of the servant.

"I am so glad, my dear, that I happened to be coming in the gate just as the poor fellow came along. I glanced my eye at him, and there was something in his countenance that at once attracted me."

"Has he not pretty eyes, papa?"

"What do you know about pretty eyes, you pussy?" and he patted the little fairy on the head as he said it. She was holding his hand and swinging herself to and fro before him.

"You remember, mamma," again addressing his wife, "I have often told you of my first beginning life; how I started off alone, and how disconsolate I felt. Well, it seemed to me, when I first had a full view of his countenance, I could see how I once looked and felt."

"And you pitied him?"

"How could I help it? Ah! I tell you, children, I hope you may never know what it is to be alone in the world; poor amongst strangers, not wishing to ask favors, anxious to take care of yourself, and yet not knowing what to do. Oh, it's a terrible world sometimes. None know but they who have to bear its trials in their youth, with no helping hand to give them a lift, and no kind voice to say 'God bless you; but what are you thinking of, Janette?"

"I was thinking, if you had not gone through what you did, a great many persons might not be as well off as they now are."

"You mean yourself and this little puss, and mamma and the rest of you?"

"Oh, no! I was not thinking of ourselves, but others whom you have helped."

"Well, never mind that. But don't you think, my dear, there is something peculiarly prepossessing in his countenance, there is a softness, and yet energy with it—a kind of determination that would make him go ahead, although his feelings might shrink at the encounter."

"I expect, papa, you must give your imagination, or more properly your heart, credit for your discernment, you have found out that he has no parents, and is poor, is going a long distance to try and make his own way, and you see all kinds of good qualities in his countenance, just as I can see some very strong marks of a tender heart in your face, when one who did not know you might say—

"Out with it, Jenny, out with it."

The lovely speaker, whose proper name was Janette, and the eldest of the two daughters, whispered the remark which she was designing to make to her mother.

"What does she say, mamma?"

"Oh, nothing—only what we all say, that we wish you would put away that scowl; it belies your heart."

"It does, ha! well the scowl has not come there without a

cause. I've had to encounter many a hard storm while my features were being formed; it's a wonder they have not been worse twisted than they now are. Ah! there comes Evart; he drives like Jehu, but he well may now, for the storm is at his heels."

The person alluded to drove directly to the stables, with all the speed he could make, while the members of the family withdrew from the piazza in haste, each running to different quarters of the house, in order to close all openings against the furious tempest which was filling the air with its mighty roar, and bringing on its wing a dense cloud of dust and leaves. Its first blast against the dwelling was with a fury that made the strong fabric tremble as if an earthquake were rumbling beneath its foundations, and for a few moments, even the stoutest heart under its roof was made to feel how terrible is "He who rideth upon the whirlwind, and directs the storm." A little more letting forth of his mysterious agents and their dwelling, strong as they thought it, would be but as the chaff of the thrashing-floor.

Henry, on retiring to the little room assigned him, had forgotten all about the storm, which, but a short period before, had filled him with dismay, and to do him justice, we must say, that he had made up his mind, when hopeless of finding shelter, to meet it and bear its fury. He knew not indeed how his resolution might hold out in the time of trial, but he had a kind of confidence that he was travelling the path assigned him, and that He whom he had begun to acknowledge in all his ways, would not only direct his path, but prove a protection in his time of need. But now all thoughts of it had passed away, and his first act, after being left by his polite attendant, was to take out the little leaf from his pocket and read a few of its verses. Oh, how like a light from heaven had the scene of the last few moments been; it shone upon the passage which had a few days previous been deeply impressed upon his mind, with a lovely brilliance, and his heart burned within him. Already had he received a token of the divine care—how opportune had it come. As on angel's wings he had been transported, and his drooping, fearful heart made to rejoice in a kindly welcome; he had felt the warm grasp and met the pleasant smile, and been made to feel at home amongst hearts full of melting

charity, and now, while the wind howls, and the thunders crash around, he is pouring out thanksgiving from his full heart. As he arose and looked forth upon the raging elements, he wondered he had ever allowed himself to be so disturbed by them in days past; but the spell is now broken, their aspect henceforth will never, he feels assured, be fraught with terror to him.

Feeling that respect for those of whose hospitality he was partaking, demanded of him the best appearance he could make, he soon exchanged his rough travelling dress for one more appropriate for the circle he was about to enter. Carefully arranging everything in his room, that had in any way been disturbed by use, and repacking with care his little portmanteau, he was about to descend, when a gentle rap at the door, and the pleasant voice of Randolph caused him at once to open it.

"Mamma sends her compliments, and says, if you are ready, she will be happy to see you at the tea-table."

Following his guide, who chatted with him pleasantly on the way about the terrible gust, and how it had frightened some of them, he was soon ushered into a spacious hall, where the family were assembling for the evening meal, and was again receiving a welcome from the lady of the house, when his hand was grasped by a youth of his own age, and cordially shook. Henry was at first so astonished as scarcely to realize they had ever met before.

"You haven't forgotten me?"

"Oh, no! oh, no! Mr. Marston, please excuse me; our meeting is so unexpected."

"Unexpected it is indeed to me, I assure you; but allow me now to introduce you. Aunt, this is Mr. Henry Thornton. My uncle, Captain Marston. My cousins, Miss Janette, and this is Miss Laura Marston. My cousin Randolph." There were two other ladies to whom he was presented, but Henry was too much confounded with the scene to keep any distinct recollection of their names. He bore himself through the ceremony with an ease of manner highly gratifying to the whole company; and his appearance so contrasted with that of his first introduction, that Capt. Marston (as we shall hereafter call him) was as much confounded as Henry, and suffered his nephew to go through with his polite attentions

to the young man, without any interference on his part; but no sooner had he completed the circuit than he began to ask for light upon the mystery.

"Why, where was it, Master Evart, that you and this young gentleman became acquainted?"

"Oh, you know, uncle, that I spent a few days at Maple Cove. It is a terribly lonely place, and we came across each other in the woods, or rather among the cedar-bushes. We were both strangers then, and so we had a long talk together. I told him all about myself, and he told me all about himself, and we became so fond of each other that I think we are going to be first-rate friends. But I was so sorry, after we parted, that I had not thought of inviting you to ride with me. If I had known where to find you in the town, I should certainly have driven over and seen you about it; but never mind, we will keep together after this."

Capt. Marston could remember the time when his own heart was as ready as the hearts of these youth to form friendships from an hour's acquaintance. He had indeed learned better since, but he was not disposed just then to say or do aught to spoil the pleasure of their interview, although he well knew how very unsuitable a person one of them was to be an intimate companion of the other.

This new introduction of the young strangers, although from its source not of much consequence, had an effect to make all parties a little more free, and especially did it add to the comfort of Henry, who could not now doubt that the young man who had on their first interview manifested so much interest was in earnest in all his protestations of friendship.

The storm in its violence was of short duration; but the rain continued throughout the evening, and the family circle was of necessity driven from its usual gathering place on summer evenings — the wide piazza — to the parlor and piano.

"Cousin Evart," said Janette, "you must not ask me to play that tune." Evart had a particular fancy for one which Janette played, and had been entreating for it at the close of one of her pieces. "My piano is so out of tune, and especially the keys in playing that one, it is really painful to me to try it. Just hear that! the C and E strings are

utterly out of the way; that is the worst about a piano in the country, it is so difficult to get a tuner."

Henry had taken a seat quietly by himself at some distance from the circle that had gathered around the instrument, but near enough to hear the remarks of Miss Janette. He arose, and speaking to young Marston, asked him "whether they had a piano key?"

"I believe so. Cousin, have you a key?"

"Oh, yes! can you tune it?"

"I cannot, but perhaps here is some one who can;" and he looked inquiringly at Henry, and at once every eye was directed that way. Henry blushed deeply, for he did not anticipate that his question would have been thus noticed.

"Perhaps," he said, "if the strings are not broken, and they merely need screwing up, I may possibly be able to make them a little better than they now are."

The piano was quickly opened, and with a trembling hand he put the key upon the faulty strings. All made way for him, and stood looking with some astonishment at the young operator, and perhaps with doubts as to his ability. Some difficulty occurred at first from the fact that the pegs would not retain their position when screwed to the proper tension. Henry, however, found a way to remedy that defect, and after trying the keys sufficiently to satisfy himself, quietly resigned his seat, and turning to Miss Janette—

"Will you please, miss, try them now? Perhaps they may not be quite in order yet."

"Oh, yes, they are! I can tell. But you must know how to play if you know how to tune it."

Henry could not prevaricate, but he was really very much opposed to making any display of the little he did know. His offer to correct the faulty strings was made without any forethought, and from a desire that his friend Marston should be gratified with his favorite tune.

"I have not received any instruction, and can therefore play but a few simple tunes. It would please me much that Mr. Marston should hear the tune he has asked for."

Janette, without any more ado, proceeded to gratify her cousin, and even, at his request, repeated the performance; while Henry, to avoid notice, resumed his former seat. But Janette had no idea of letting him off so easily. She no

sooner had finished the tune than she arose, and approaching Henry—

"Now surely you will not refuse!"

He made no opposition, although the deep color that suffused his cheeks convinced all present that he yielded only out of deference to her who had asked the favor.

He made no excuses, for he had already told them that his skill was obtained merely by his own efforts. Nor did he make any flourishes as a prelude to his performance. But commenced at once, and played with great ease of manner a simple melody. It was plaintive, and from the peculiar circumstances deeply affected all who heard it. It seemed to tell the story of his life, and Mrs. Marston could not help saying to her husband, by whose side she sat, in a whisper,

"That poor boy!"

Mr. Marston did not reply; but the scowl upon his brow, and his compressed lips, told that his heart was at work; either meditating upon the past of his own life, or thinking in what way he could do something to benefit one so strangely thrown in his way. Alas! what would our world be, were it not that such hearts as his are still glowing, amid its grasping selfishness! And, blessed be God, such there are, scattered here and there; lights amid the darkness; ready to cheer the desponding, to assist the helpless, to guide the uncertain steps of resolute youth, and start them fairly in their struggle with its stern realities—who eat not their bread alone, but stand ever ready to beckon to their board the stranger and the fatherless. Their hoarded treasures gather no rust, and their warm hearts never lose the freshness and gushing purity of early life. Man is their brother! The pangs which rend his spirit they feel and hasten to allay. And thus even to the last, when gathering years, which throw around the lover of the glittering one an adamantine wall, that shuts him off from joy and tender sympathy with all the world, and his heart shivers within its sunless bounds—warm rays still gladden and bright smiles beam on their silvered heads, and tears fall freely on their closing graves!

It was early dawn when Henry awoke the next morning, and he arose and prepared himself to take a view abroad of the extensive scenery which lay beneath the elevated ground on which the house was located.

The skies were bright and the air fresh and fragrant, and his heart was more buoyant than it had been for many months before. Such the effect of kindness and a few hours' welcome among the truly refined in heart and manners.

The mansion itself was an object that conveyed to the mind thoughts of large-hearted hospitality. It had no stately pillars nor unmeaning finery. It was no lofty building, towering in cold nakedness to show its owner's wealth. But the house and its appurtenances seemed to have been made for use. On every side, except its front, buildings jutted from it, that had been added, no doubt, as its owner needed more room. All were in keeping; a regard to symmetry had been observed that made the whole a sightly object. Large trees stood here and there, now dripping with the dew of morning, as the swarms of happy birds stirred the rich foliage. A fine lawn spread far away in front, and clumps of maple studded it, and neat stone fences bound it in. On either side behind lay the large garden. Trees, too, were here, and long wide walks lined with summer flowers. All this, too, seemed more designed for use than show. It was a spot where sheltered nooks could be found, where one could meditate alone, if so disposed, or hold sweet converse with a friend upon the rustic seat.

Henry had never seen so much of simple elegance before; and he thought—what will not boys think—"that if he lived to be a man, and, after years of toil, should earn an independence, that he would have just such a place, and fix it just as neatly; and what comfort he would take in sitting quietly on just such rustic seats, and having just such shady spots, and walks, and flowers."

Nor was the garden all. Far as the eye could reach between the hills, on north and south, there lay spread out an extended valley. Woods, rich meadows, a winding road, a few farmhouses, and the blue water beyond them all, stretching far around. Just then, to crown the scene, the sun came up, and his cheerful beams spanned the area before him with the speed of thought, lighting the valley and brightening the hill-tops.

Henry and his friend Evart—for we must now call them *friends*—had spent some time together the previous evening, and it had been agreed that Henry should take a seat beside

him in his gig, and they were to have a nice long ride together, and Henry, at his friend's earnest entreaty, had engaged to go directly to his home with him, and to stay there until he could find a place; and he had a noble heart, who thus clung to a stranger and offered his aid and a home to one who had nothing to give in return but his warm affection, and Henry had truly given him that.

Evart had made all his arrangements for an early start. The cheerful breakfast was eaten, and the servant was already making preparations to bring his horse to the door, when Mr. Marston called the young men into an adjoining room:

"I fear," said he, "that I shall be compelled to break in upon your plan for a journey together to the city. It is time, I know, Evart, for you to be at home, as your mother is expecting you."

Evart's fears were at once aroused lest he should be deprived of his companion.

"Oh, but, uncle, you know mother will not care. A day or two will make no difference; she will think I am having a nice time here, and "——

"No, no, Evart! That will not do. You know we are always glad to see you, and to have you stay as long as you can; but when you have told your mother that you would be home at a certain time, you should always, except something prevents which you cannot overcome, keep your word with her; begin at once to do so in all things, and she will the more readily yield to your requests. No, you had better not defer your return; you will probably have a fair day, and will reach the city by evening. And, as to this young gentleman, I wish to get a little better acquainted with him, and as I have some writing to do in which he can assist me very much, if he is willing to remain for a few days it would be quite pleasing to me."

"Oh, by all means, sir! If I can be of any service, and it is your wish. Certainly, sir!" Henry was very prompt with his reply; but Captain Marston saw plainly from the deep color of his countenance that he was sorely disappointed. At the same time he was gratified to hear his ready assent to the request which he had made. Young Marston well knew that his uncle's decision was not likely to be reversed, and therefore, with as good a grace as possible, prepared to yield.

"Well, uncle, I shall have a lonely ride, and I had been anticipating good company; and then, too, I thought how much pleasanter for Henry than to have to foot it all the way."

"Oh, thank you! I thank you very much! But I shall not mind the walk at all; two or three days will take me there very easily."

Captain Marston was about to reply when he was interrupted by a call from one of the laborers, and the two youth were left to say their adieu alone.

"There is no use in saying anything to uncle when his mind is made up. He has been so accustomed to have his orders obeyed on board ship, that it is a word and a blow with him"—while saying this he had taken Henry's hand—"but it may be best for you. I am sorry, though. But mind and come right to our house; remember, you have said you would. Good bye!"

Henry could not very well say what he wished to. The frank and friendly manner of young Marston had won his warmest feelings. He felt as if parting with a friend he had loved for years—so soon in youth's lovely season does the heart yield its confidence and regard. He returned the ardent pressure of the hand, and without either scrutinizing the countenance of the other, they separated. Evart went to take leave of his relatives, and Henry walked into the hall, and saw through the open door the establishment of his friend in readiness for departure.

"And now, Master Henry," said Captain Marston, as he placed his hand upon the shoulder of the youth, who was standing with the members of the family, watching through the openings in the avenue the receding carriage of Evart, "come with me, if you please; I wish to have a word with you."

Henry immediately followed through the wide hall into a narrower passage, and from thence down a few steps, and was introduced into a very delightful room of small dimensions, when compared with those he had already seen, but surrounded with shrubbery and flowers, and a door opening from it upon a wide low stoop, and one of the garden walks passing immediately before it. He recognized it as one of those additions to the house which he had noticed when in the

garden that morning. And he remembered how pleasant he thought that room must be.

"This is my office, as I generally call it; but some of them call it the study. Take that seat; I want to have a little chat with you." And Henry did as he was bidden, while Captain Marston settled himself in a large arm-chair.

"It was for no purpose of disappointing either you or my nephew, that I have thought proper to change your plans." Henry would have said something in order to assure him that he, for his part, was perfectly satisfied of that. But two reasons just then operated to keep him silent. One was, that the gentleman, when conversing, spoke in rather a stern tone of voice, and quite rapidly, and Henry feared to interrupt him. And another was, that immediately opposite to where he sat there hung upon the wall a small portrait of a young lady, and its features were so familiar to him that his eye involuntarily fastened upon it; and so strangely was he affected, that he was like to have lost altogether what was said to him. By a violent effort, however, he commanded his feelings. "But sometimes those of us who are older, and have experience to assist our judgment, come to very different conclusions from those who are just beginning life. My nephew, Evart, is a noble-minded youth, very generous, and also a little fanciful, perhaps, though not more so than many of his age. He is wealthy, or he will be so when he comes of age. At present he has all that a young man ought to spend; but I guess not as much as he does spend; his mother, no doubt, supplies his demands when they get beyond his income. Like all mothers, she has no heart to deny her son when she ought to do so. You hear me, Master Henry?"

"Oh yes, sir!"

"For a youth with his disposition to be thus situated, in a city where there are thousands of idle scamps ready to get into his good graces and lead him into all kinds of evil, it is a sad, sad thing. He has not much taste for study for its own sake, and as for learning a profession—why he says, 'Where is the use? I shall have money enough. Why should I bother myself about such matters?' And it is the same if he is urged to learn business: 'Where is the use? I do not care to have any more money; I shall have enough.'

And in one sense he is right. He will have enough, and more than any man ought to spend. But if he could see things properly he would realize that a man cannot be happy without some absorbing object, some useful calling to engage the mind. But, poor fellow, as he is situated, there is no motive strong enough to urge him on. I wish it was not so; but it is a matter beyond my control, and I have many fears as to what the end may be. But you, Master Henry, are beginning the world with nothing; you have nothing, as I understand, but your own energies to depend on? Is it not so?"

"I have nothing else, sir."

"Just so. Your character, then, will be of great consequence to you. I mean not only your character for integrity —for perfect truthfulness; but also for industry and attention —for knowing all the little secrets of your trade, and for economy. A great intimacy between you and one situated as Evart is, would be a serious damage to you. You understand me, Henry?"

"I think I do, sir."

"Evart means well enough, no doubt; but keep in mind what I say. His friendship may do you more harm than good."

"I should be sorry to think so, sir."

"And I am sorry to feel obliged to say anything that appears like throwing cold water upon your friendly feelings for each other; but in justice to you, I feel bound to set the truth before you. And now, as to the work which I wish done; when you have looked round a little and feel like going to work, just let me know."

"I am quite ready to begin this moment, sir, if you are."

Without any more words, the gentleman took some papers from his desk and spreading them out—

"I wish to have these papers copied carefully, and let the writing be as distinct as possible. Take your own time; and when you get tired just put them into this drawer, so that you will know where to find them when you are ready to begin again. It may occupy you some days, and, in consequence, you may not get to the city quite as soon as you expected; yet, as it is to be a life business with you when

you do get there, a few days sooner or later will not be material."

And thus saying, he arose and left Henry to commence his work. Captain Marston had taken a real interest in the youth, and he wished to test him on several points, that he might come to a more clear decision as to what way he could best aid him, and to become acquainted with his peculiar characteristics.

All of us who are somewhat advanced in life, have, no doubt, experienced in our youth the happiness which springs from being put for the first time to some work of a responsible nature, and in which was involved the test of our ability. It may not seem much that Henry was set merely at copying some papers; but to him it was the beginning of his life's business. He felt it to be so. It was something with which he was to take much care; it was something necessary to be done, and he resolved that no pains should be spared on his part, and no time wasted. He would not even pause to examine the picture which had at first sight so riveted his attention.

## CHAPTER VII.

Captain Marston had indeed, as he said, battled with many a storm, not only on the ocean, but on land. He had been left with an only brother, in early life, to seek their own living as they best could. Their parentage was respectable, but when quite young the boys were left orphans, and scorning a dependence upon relatives, they resolved to sustain themselves. The elder of the two found a situation in a store, and in time became a wealthy merchant, and dying, left, as has been said, a large fortune to his two children, of whom the youth Evart Marston was one.

Frank, the younger brother, chose the sea for his profession, and obtained, through the influence of a friend, a midshipman's commission in the navy. In this he continued until he gained the rank of first-lieutenant, and then resigned in order that he might take command of a merchant ship in the China trade. With a keen judgment, and an ardent spirit for enterprise, he engaged more largely in shipments for his own account than masters of vessels usually do, and after several prosperous voyages connected himself with a large commission house in Philadelphia. In this, prosperity also attended him, and at the age of forty-five, he retired from all regular business, and used his funds, as his judgment dictated, by investments in real estate in the city of New York, and occasionally in shipments abroad that offered a fair prospect of profit.

This latter branch of business he was still engaged in when introduced to the reader.

He had left the sea as a profession before he married, and was, of course, somewhat advanced in life. Mrs. Marston belonged to one of the aristocratic families that were settled in the county of Westchester. When or how they met is of no consequence. She was much younger than Captain Marston, a lady of great beauty, and highly accomplished. The choice she had made was quite agreeable to her father, who was her only surviving parent; but very much against the will of her

elder sister. This lady was a daughter by a previous marriage, and therefore a half-sister to Mrs. Marston. She had formed certain notions of respectability, which she held to with a grasp which no argument could affect; and that one so nearly related to her should, as she said, "throw herself away upon a mere sea captain," was to her a sin never to be pardoned. Captain Marston was, however, by no means a mere sea captain. His mind was well cultivated, his heart noble and generous, and his manners highly dignified and courteous. But all these were as naught to this elder sister; any obstacle she could throw in the way of the union was offered, even to rude treatment and threats of vengeance.

But when she found that her father would be lord and master in his own domain, and that, in spite of all her opposition, the union was to take place, and to be celebrated with much parade, she left her home, and took up her abode with a maiden aunt in the vicinity, whose views coincided with her own, and who, it is said, secretly fanned the wicked flame in the breast of her niece. "Never again," she said, "should her feet tread within the walls of a house polluted as that had been, by a festival in honor of one whose base views could lead her to throw herself away upon one of the ruff-scuff of the earth!" We are not answerable for the language of the lady, and quote it merely to show the quality of her mind: "And more than this, *a curse shall follow it.*"

The union was consummated, and happiness was the attendant of the married pair, not only for the first few months, but for the whole period they had lived together, now seventeen years. There had, indeed, been one dark spot on their journey! It had not injured their love for each other, but, by exciting their mutual sympathies for one common sorrow, had tended to bind them more closely together.

Their first babe, as lovely an object as a parent's eye could look upon, had been snatched from them when a few months old, in a manner more galling to a parent's heart than if death had taken the spirit of the lovely being, and left them the lifeless body. It was on a summer evening; the happy parents had gone to take a short ride and spend a few hours with a friend. The little one had been left by its nurse asleep in the cradle, in a room on the ground floor. She had not left it long, or so she said—but her mind was so weak-

ened by the convulsions which almost immediately ensued, that memory with her had lost its power—but when she did return, the little sleeper was nowhere to be found. The agony of the parents cannot be told. Imagination may faintly portray upon the mind a glimmer of the reality; but imagination has no words that can reveal to others such terrible, such withering grief!

Every effort, at the instant the catastrophe was known to the parents, was made, that was in the power of an outraged neighborhood to make. Officers of justice were empowered to search every house in the vicinity, and men on horseback scoured the highways and lanes and woods. But all in vain!

It was not the period of railroads and magnetic telegraphs; but if willing hearts and swift riders could have brought back the lost treasure, it would have been accomplished.

Years rolled on, and new treasures were added to them in three bright and fair children; but the sore in the parents' hearts had never healed. Could they but have known that their lost lamb had breathed its last, that its sorrowful path in life had ended, there would have been an alleviation of their anguish, even could they never know where its dust reposed; but imagination now was ever picturing the loved one as tempest-tossed, and perhaps an outcast under unhallowed influences, preparing for a life of sin and wretchedness.

Studiously had they avoided giving any information to their children on the painful subject; but whisperings reached their ears from others, and all the parents could do was to forbid any allusions among themselves to the sad event.

But they had never given up the hope of one day finding their lost one, although every effort, hitherto, had been fruitless.

A few days after Henry had been an inmate of their dwelling, Mrs. Marston requested her husband to come with her into a room that was not often visited by the family; she wished to communicate with him alone, and without fear of interruption.

"I am almost afraid, dear husband," began Mrs. Marston, "that you will think me foolish? but I must let out my feelings to you. I had some conversation with Henry this morning, and it very strangely led to a subject which you and I have so long had upon our hearts."

Mr. Marston looked much surprised; but the tones of his voice were tender, as they always were in addressing her whom he so much loved.

"Not about ——? You surely have not mentioned anything to him?"

"Oh, no! my dear, of course not; but let me tell you: I walked into the room, as I usually do, to see that Margaret had put things in proper order. Henry was busy at his work, and I spoke a few pleasant words to him, when, as he turned to reply, I saw his eye glance towards that picture of mine which you keep so choice there in your room."

"I have noticed how attracted he is by that likeness; he was so the first time I took him into that room, and he gazed at it so earnestly while I was conversing with him, that I had to ask, once or twice, whether he understood what I was saying."

"I think his curiosity has been greatly excited, and that from the first he has been anxious to know for whom it was intended. I saw, from his inquiring glance at me and then at the picture, that he was trying to reconcile my countenance with that."

"He might easily do that."

"Not so easily, dear husband! I am twenty years older than I was then; my hair does not curl as it did then, and the style of dressing it has altered.

"I perceived his curiosity, and asked—'Have you ever seen any one whom that resembles, Henry?' The poor fellow blushed deeply; he had not been conscious, I suppose, how inquiring his look had been; after a moment, he replied:

"'I thought just then, and at several other times, Mrs. Marston, that it looked like you; but it seems to me a perfect likeness of a young lady I know. Sometimes it almost startles me when I cast a glance at it, as if she was about to speak to me.'

"'The picture was taken for me, Henry, when I was fifteen years of age! How old is the young lady you speak of?"

"'She is about fifteen, I believe, ma'm.'

"'Where does she live, Henry?'

"'She lives at Stratton, a few miles from where I lived.'

"'Are her parents living?'

"'No, ma'm; she lives with her uncle, Esquire Thompson.'

"I felt so faint just then, that I had to take a seat and hold up the paper before my face, as though I was about to look over it, when Henry again commenced writing; in a few moments, I asked:

"'How long since you have seen that young lady?'

"He immediately turned towards me, and smiling, replied:

"'Only a few days ago, ma'm."

"'Then I may suppose this young lady has made a strong impression on your mind! and you think that portrait resembles her?'

"'Oh, yes, ma'm! The same curling hair, the same dark eyes, and the same mouth, and then almost the same frown. If you notice, Mrs. Marston, there is a little frown on this.'

"I walked up to gratify the boy, for he was so engaged—and affected to notice it, but my heart beat so violently that I was obliged to say something by way of changing the subject, and left the room. Oh! my dear husband, what does it mean?"

"It means nothing, dear Caroline, but that your mind is so alive to this subject, that you are ready to catch at any possibility, however improbable it may be! In this case, you see, although she has no parents, she has an uncle, and aunt, and cousins. No, my dear; it seems to me we have done all that can be done. It would be better for us both to try and let the matter rest. Thinking of it only harrows up our minds. Again and again have we had some hope excited—only to be disappointed. Whoever has done the deed has truly found out an exquisite torture for a parent's heart! But, as I believe in a righteous God, I have strong faith that, although we may never find our child, some terrible judgment will yet overtake the guilty one."

"But my dear husband, it seems to me that every shadow of a possibility should be examined by us. There is certainly something very strange in the impression which has been made upon the mind of that boy! and then the age too—only think of that—and no parents living! How do we certainly know whether the gentleman Henry speaks of is really her uncle—such titles are often used by courtesy, you know!"

Mr. Marston knew all that, and his own interest was as deeply excited as that of his lady, but he did not wish to en-

courage the faintest hope in her mind, that might only end as all their former hopes.

"Yes," he said, "that is true; but such things, you know, are not generally secrets; the facts leak out. If Henry was intimate in the family, he would, no doubt, have known had there been no real relationship. But still, dear Caroline, we will not let even this shadow of hope pass without further inquiry. Our friend Vernon, you know, passes his summers there, or near there, I will write to him. Vernon has no particular business of his own, without it is that of trying to do all the good he can in the world."

"I thought, my dear, you had a poor opinion of him; you have sometimes spoken rather disparagingly of him! I mean to me."

"Oh well, I know there have been times when I have been vexed by his pertinacity in boring me with his Methodism or Calvinism, or whatever it is! But I believe he is very sincere in his views, and has a strong desire for my good, and he has tried to convince me that this trial is for my benefit! If the object of it is to poison all our enjoyments, and spoil what little comfort we might have from them, it certainly accomplishes that."

Mrs. Marston would have replied, but she knew that her husband's heart would be more likely to yield to its own suggestions on the great subject which he had touched upon, than to anything another would say; and her own mind was only just beginning to feel the healthful touch of a divine influence.

"You will write to Vernon, then, at once?"

"I certainly will. But you will see, Caroline, that its only effect will be, to bring a long letter on my obligations of submission, and all that."

Captain Marston's object having been accomplished in detaining Henry, and having satisfied himself that the boy had the right spirit in him, to make his way when once a start could be given him, he wrote a letter of introduction to a firm in Broadway, engaged in the drygoods business, stating what he believed concerning the youth, and saying that it would confer a particular favor upon himself if a berth could be given to the boy in their store, or if not, if they would lend a helping hand in procuring a situation for him.

Henry was yet a boy, and we must not charge him with weakness if, when he was taking his last leave of those who had treated him with such kindness, his only power of saying "good bye" was with the grasp of his hand, a flushed face and the silent tear.

Mr. Marston, without any notice to Henry, had ordered his own horse and carriage brought to the door, while the latter was getting ready to depart.

"Now jump in, my boy."

Henry was surprised, and looked in astonishment at Captain Marston, who sat there holding the reins.

"Jump in—I am going to take you to the tavern from whence the stage starts. Have you said good bye to all?"

Henry made no reply, but did as requested, and as he looked round and beheld hands waving in kindness, and wafting blessings upon him, his overcharged feelings gave way! He was a little child again; and the strong heart beside him would have been much relieved could it have found vent for its sympathies in the same way.

But little was said until they were about to separate, when the gentleman remarked to Henry,

"Your stage fare is paid—you know I am indebted to you for several days' work."

"Please sir, do not speak of indebtedness to me! It has only been a pleasure—your kindness can never be repaid by me so long as I live."

"But Henry, you are now going to a place where you will find that your wants can only be supplied by money! I need not tell you to be prudent in spending it, for I am convinced you are so disposed, but I should like to know how you are off for funds—you may not be in the way of earning anything for some time.

"Oh, sir, I am well off! I have nearly twenty dollars."

"Well, that is more than I had, when in your situation, but you can add this to your little stock," handing Henry a folded bill. "Keep up good courage—avoid bad company—pay strict attention to your business, and with —— with a blessing, you will do well, I have no doubt."

If Captain Marston had wanted any reward for what he had done to cheer the heart of this young stranger, he must have been fully satisfied as he felt the clinging grasp of his

hand, and met his kindling eye! The stage was just starting —Henry took his seat. The horn sent forth its shrill blast; the long lash cracked over the leaders' heads, and with a sudden bound the swinging vehicle flew from the door, and Henry was once more alone! A stranger to those about him, and to those among whom he expected to be cast.

## CHAPTER VIII.

We left poor Louise in the shanty of Caroline, with Mr Vernon standing beside her bed, and ready to hear what urgent request she had to make.

As soon as she was satisfied that her uncle and Mr. Vernon had departed, she turned to Caroline.

"That will do now—thank you! You are very kind—that will do now! But I want to see Mr. Vernon alone a few minutes—you know him well—and that I shall not be very likely to make any plans with him which you may not approve."

"Oh dear, no! Mr. Vernon ain't a man who would give wrong advice to young or old. I will go out, darling, and be by the spring—that is my seat always when the weather will allow, and Mr. Vernon will call me when I am wanted."

The gentleman took his seat by the side of the young girl, and in a mild voice asked—

"What request have you to make, Miss Louise? What is there I can do for you?"

"Oh, I do not know that you can do anything for me, Mr. Vernon! But I have many times wished for an opportunity to talk with you. Oh, sir! I want a friend—an unselfish friend; one who is wise enough to direct me, and able to do something for me. I am very unhappy! I am wretched! It would have been much better for me that this fall had put an end to my existence!"

"Stop, stop, Louise! If you think my advice of any consequence, I would say to you: never, never indulge such feelings as you have now expressed. They are very wrong; they manifest a rebellious, ungrateful spirit. You are not, in all probability, in a fit condition to leave the world. Life is a blessing; it is designed as such. And there are light and peace to be enjoyed, even under the darkest dispensations of Divine Providence, when the heart yields submissively to His will."

"Oh, I suppose it is wrong! But you do not know how unhappy I am!"

"I do not, indeed, know your cause of grief; and, situated as you are, under the care of near relatives, abundantly able and, no doubt, willing to aid and comfort you, it might not be proper that a stranger to you, as I am comparatively, should be intrusted with your confidence."

"But, sir, what if I had no relations?"

"That would be different. But no supposition of that kind is allowable in your case."

"Yes, sir, it is."

"Is not Esquire Thompson your uncle?"

"No, sir."

"Nor Mrs. Thompson your aunt?"

"No, sir, they are neither of them any relation to me; nor is any other human being, that I know of, in this world."

And the agitated girl covered her face and burst into tears. Mr. Vernon, for the first time since the interview, called to mind a rumor which once reached him—how, he did not remember—"That Louise was not a relative of the family in which she lived." He waited until the burst of grief had subsided, and then replied:

"I fear, my dear child, that you have chosen a wrong time to make any communication in reference to a subject that is calculated to excite you. Let me add my advice to that of the doctor, that you keep quiet; compose your feelings. You have received quite a shock from this fall, and excitement may retard your recovery. I should be very sorry if my assent to your wish should prove the means of preventing your removal to your home this afternoon."

Louise grasped the arm of Mr. Vernon, and fixed her eye upon him with such a mingled expression of earnestness and sorrow, that he could not but feel a deep interest, and a strong desire to relieve her mind, if in his power to do so.

"I will be perfectly calm, and I will not talk much; only hear me a few words. I want to accomplish two things: First, I wish to go away from my present home. I wish to go where I shall not be known; I care not what situation I have, only to be where I shall not be conscious that those about me know or care from whence I came, to whom I belong, or what becomes of me. I cannot, oh! I cannot live

and mingle with those as my equals, who have in their minds continually the dreadful fact, that I may be the child of outcasts, of felons, of beggars, or of those who may have expiated their crimes upon the gallows! I cannot, I cannot, I will not live thus! I care not for the property; it can do me no good. I had rather be among the poor."

Mr. Vernon was spell-bound. Her words came forth in a quiet manner, perfectly in contrast with the thrilling emotions they conveyed; he felt that there was such harrowing truth in what she said; such a portraying of inner grief, as in youth or age demanded sympathy. He pressed her hand.

"Be calm as you can. Tell me all you wish; you shall find in me a friend. I feel for you; I will aid you all in my power. Be patient, too; do nothing rashly; submit, quietly as you can, to your present trials. Have you anything further that you wish to say to me?"

"Yes. I said there were two things I wished to accomplish: one of these I have told you. The other is of more consequence still. You know this Caroline Jeralman? she esteems you very highly. You have more power over her, I am sure, than any one else."

"I have always treated Caroline with kindness; I have a great pity for her. She is, at times, very unhappy; there is some weight upon her mind; so it seems to me. She is disposed to melancholy; and I have had fears, that in some of those turns, she might be tempted to take her own life. I fear there is some part of her history that will not bear dwelling upon; but have never attempted to pry into it, and only endeavored to direct her to the true source of comfort for the sinful and the sorrowing."

"I have reasons for believing, Mr. Vernon, that she knows more about me than any one else does; she has always been strangely meddlesome in my affairs; in some way she has contrived to keep around me, wherever I am. When in New York—so far back as I can remember anything—she used to come, every day or two, where I lived; and no sooner had I been put to school at Melton, than I found she was living, not far off, with an old woman in the neighborhood, and she would contrive, in some way, to see me whenever I walked abroad; and since I have been here, she has taken possession of this shanty, and pursues the same course. And sometimes

she has dropped such expressions as these: 'You are not so much alone in the world as you think you are;' and when, on my knees, I have begged her to tell me, if she did know anything about me, she would say: 'Sometimes it is not best to know about those we sprang from.' I feel very sure, sir, that she does know something about me that others do not; and, oh! sir, if you only could get her to reveal it to you! If any one can do it, you can. I want to know the worst."

Mr. Vernon listened with deep attention. The few things Louise had told of Caroline's conduct towards herself, connected with what *he* also knew, convinced him there was some strange secret in the breast of that woman, which ought, if possible, to be brought to light.

A few moments after Louise had ceased speaking, he sat silently pondering; at length, without any apparent emotion, he said:

"You have asked of me what it may not be in my power to accomplish: but I will say to you, my dear child, your request shall not be forgotten by me. Do you say nothing to Caroline, or to any one else, of the purport of your present communication. It will require great caution, and some months may intervene before anything can be done in the matter; and perhaps I can do nothing after all. But you may rely upon it, I shall not forget your case, in any of its peculiarities. I will endeavor to see you as often as circumstances will permit; perhaps I may yet be a frequent visitor at Esquire Thompson's. My advice to you now is: be removed as soon as possible to your home, and treat your friends with due respect."

"I have always done so."

"That is right; continue to do so. Have patience; trust in God; do you pray to him, Louise?"

Louise covered her face, but did not reply. Alas, poor child! it was the first time the subject had ever been mentioned to her; her infant lips had never been taught to lisp "Our Father who art in heaven," and no one with whom she had been cast, had ever ventured to ask her the question.

"I fear, from your silence, Louise, that you do not."

"I have never learned to pray, sir."

"It is easily learned if you have only the heart to try. You know not that you have any living earthly parents; but

you have a Heavenly Father. He has in many ways signally marked his care of you, and manifested his kindness to you. Oh, do not deny yourself the blessed privilege of going to him, confessing all your sins, casting your burdens upon him, asking his counsel in all your ways, and his blessing on every step you take. Feel that he is your Father, that He loves you, and that he can do for you what no earthly friend can! Will you, Louise, do as I request?"

"I will—I will! I will do just as you have told me. Oh, how I thank you!"

"And now, good bye. I am glad that we have had this interview. I came to see Caroline, at her own request. But I shall defer my visit with her just now, and will send her at once to you. Good bye."

Esquire Thompson was highly gratified, when he came for Louise, to find her so ready to be removed, and without any manifestation of having remembered or laid up anything against him. She suffered considerable pain in being conveyed to the carriage and when on the road, but made as little complaint as possible.

The squire had given his own version of the affair at home, and he rather hoped that Louise, in consequence of her unconscious state at the time, remembered not how it happened.

It was not many days after this scene that, as the squire was seated in his office, he saw the carriage of Mr. Vernon stop at his gate. He was somewhat surprised and not very well pleased. They had never had any dealings together and were not likely to have, for Mr. Vernon was known to be very averse to a recourse to law; even suffering injustice at times rather than engage in a legal contest. He therefore had never paid the squire any fee, nor did the latter expect he would ever receive any from him. And as a mere acquaintance, Mr. Vernon was not one whose general habits were congenial to the squire. He was indeed known to be a man of property; he owned large tracts of land in Stratton and its vicinity, as well as much real estate in the city of New York; and was, therefore, whenever he came into the country to spend a few months, as he did every summer, treated with courtesy by those even who were rather disposed to ridicule his peculiar ways, and Esquire Thompson was among this number. The

squire had no special regard for religion himself, and when a man carried out the principles of his faith to such a degree that he was often around sick-beds and took pains to visit the poor, and those who might be suffering from calamity of any kind, not only praying with them, but dealing out liberally from his own fullness for their necessities—it was making the difference in their views and feelings too marked to be agreeable; and he rather shunned Mr. Vernon. But whenever they met, every civility took place between them. The scene at the shanty of Caroline had been an exception to this rule; and Esquire Thompson was heartily ashamed of his conduct on that occasion. He had not met with Mr. Vernon since, and he rather feared when they did meet that the subject would be brought up; for Mr. Vernon was a gentleman who would not be very likely to suffer an insult without inquiring a reason for it, even if he did not care to resent it. And for the squire to give a reason for his conduct on that occasion would not have been very pleasant.

It was, therefore, as we have said, not very agreeable to the squire to have just such a visitor as had called. He was resolved, however, to meet him cordially. He opened his office door and stood ready to receive the gentleman, who was on his way, the office being at some distance from the road.

On both sides the manner was courteous; and for a few moments the more common topics of conversation were discussed, when Mr. Vernon at once commenced the purport of his errand.

"I have taken the liberty of calling upon you this morning, Esquire Thompson, for two specific objects, and one of them is a professional matter. I want your aid in settling a little difficulty between Mr. Thorndyke and myself, in regard to the division-line between my farm on the neck and his adjoining land."

"I have heard some little talk about it."

"Has he engaged your services?"

"No, sir; he has said nothing to me about it."

Mr. Vernon then took out his pocket-book, and releasing from thence a fifty-dollar bill, laid it on the table before the squire.

"Will that, Esquire Thompson be sufficient to secure your services on my behalf."

"Certainly, sir, and more than sufficient. It is not, as I apprehend, a difficult case, by any meaus. The right of the matter can easily be come at. I hardly feel justified, Mr. Vernon, in taking so large a sum."

"Perhaps, sir, you may find more trouble in the case than you think for. The fact is, I believe Mr. Thorndyke is rather determined to have his way, and I wish the matter settled without recourse to law. Therefore the service you are to perform for me is, to exert your influence with that gentleman, that he may be induced to have the disputed point settled by arbitration; and I give you full power to arrange it just as you know such matters ought to be managed. Whatever trouble you have in the case, I assure you, shall be amply compensated."

"I understand your wish, Mr. Vernon, and will, with pleasure do what I can to accomplish it; without doubt, it can be settled in the way you propose."

"My other business, Esquire Thompson, is, in reference to a loan of money. If I am not mistaken you have advertised for a loan of seven thousand dollars, on property in New York?"

"I have, sir."

"Have you supplied yourself—or whoever it may be that wants it?"

"I have not, sir; it seems that money is not quite so plenty as it has been."

"I have funds at present unemployed, and if the security is good, will be glad to invest it in this way."

This at once brought out an explanation on the part of the esquire. "He wanted the money, although not for his personal account. The security offered was property belonging to his ward, Miss Lovelace, and the money would be used in improving the lots proposed to be mortgaged. Of course a confidential communication must be made to Mr. Vernon, concerning the property—how it became hers, and as to the powers with which the esquire was invested. All of which was not only news to Mr. Vernon, but also afforded him an insight to the state of things, which was very desirable, and which he had been now for some time anxious to obtain.

He had also gained the favorable opinion of Esquire

Thompson, and been let into some of the secrets of the family, as no other person as yet had, and from the very cordial invitation on the part of the squire "to call often at his house, he felt that an important point was gained in the work he had undertaken for Louise.

Mr. Vernon had been stimulated particularly to this effort in consequence of receiving, a few days previous, the following letter:

"GLENVILLE, July —, 18—.

"DEAR VERNON:

"I write to you at the request of my wife, in reference to an old subject, upon which we have often corresponded, and which you know is the one burden that presses so heavily upon our hearts. I do not know that I should trouble you again about this matter were it not for the urgent solicitation of Caroline. Like a true mother, she will not give up the hope of one day finding our lost one; although, for my own part, so many years have elapsed, and our expectations have been so often disappointed, that I must say, my heart desponds of ever accomplishing such a happy result. It is a dark dispensation, and a gloom hangs over the event which I would scatter if I could.

"I wish, if possible, that you should ascertain some particulars respecting a Miss Lovelace, living, as I am informed, in the family of Esquire Thompson, of Stratton.

"She is thought to be a niece of his. Will you find out whether this is really so? whether she is related to him, or, as is sometimes the case, merely calls him uncle by courtesy. You know for what reason I wish these inquiries made, and your own judgment and kind heart will dictate what others are necessary.

"Your old friend,

"FRANK MARSTON."

Mr. Vernon had immediately answered this letter, and he chose to do so before making his call upon Esquire Thompson.

The purport of his reply was—"That they might depend upon his faithful attention to their request. That as soon as he could satisfy himself there was any sure ground upon which

to rest a hope, he would inform them; but until then he could not say one word, for he should feel that he was acting an unkind part if he, in any way, excited expectations that might end in disappointment."

The facts which Mr. Vernon had ascertained from Louise, and especially from her guardian, were not likely to be lost sight of by him, and although he would not allow anything to escape from his lips or his pen, that might tend to encourage his friends in hopes that had no real foundation, yet his own mind was intensely excited on the subject.

## CHAPTER IX.

Although Henry entered the city of New York under more agreeable circumstances than he had ever anticipated; yet as the stage rolled along through the great thoroughfare, and his eye surveyed the passing throng, and the rows of lighted windows, and the haste and tumult which mark that highway of the city at the closing of the day, strange feelings came over him. A sense of loneliness he had never been quite so conscious of before. "No one knew him amid that multitude. No one cared for his welfare! All seemed to be hastening on to some fascinating goal; some engrossing object absorbed their thoughts, and the very stage, which at all the stopping-places and past the farm-houses, had attracted so much notice through the day, was now of so little consequence, that no one he could see, cast even a glance at it." Some cheering thoughts, however, he could indulge: "The letter which Captain Marston had given him! What should he have done without *that*." And, in connection with that, he recalled the hour when, faint and weary, he had met that generous man!

Hitherto he had been led by a kind hand, and he would try to "trust with all his heart."

Evart Marston, too! "He was somewhere in this great Babel!" And although he had not forgotten the warning of Mr. Marston, still, it would be a comfort to meet Evart—to feel the kind grasp of his hand, and have the assurance that there was one human being, amid the multitude of strange faces, whom he had seen before.

Henry had not inquired of the driver, where the stage would stop, and land its passengers. He had not thought of that, and if he had, it would not have given him any clear comprehension of matters; his ideas of the magnitude of the place were very indefinite. It was, therefore, with no little satisfaction that, on entering the stage-house and making the inquiry, "What street is this?" he received the reply, "Cortlandt street." "Why, this was the very street in which Evart lived, and perhaps his house was near at hand!" He re-

membered the number, and with his portmanteau in hand, sallied forth at once in search of it. To his great joy, in looking at the number from whence he was about to start, he perceived that it must be near at hand. Some little difficulty occurred however, in making out by the flickering lights of the street, the figures on the doors; at length he noticed one house at whose front were two lighted lamps, springing up from the iron railings of the stoop. They threw a glare around which quite obscured the little twinkling rays from the posts, that were scattered at regular intervals through the street. He looked up, and to his amazement beheld the very number he was searching for, and on a brass plate, in very distinct letters, was the name of Marston! For a moment he stood surveying the stately building; rich drapery hung at the windows, almost shutting from view the interior of the room—but he could see through the narrow openings, brilliant lights hanging in its centre, and little dangling glasses around them, reflecting various colors.

He had never seen anything so fine before. The house, too, seemed a little higher than those around it, and its finish was more tasteful, and it had a newer look. Many doubts at once troubled him. Everything that he could see distinguished it as the abode of wealth; and although he had been told that Evart was rich, yet he had not thought how he would be affected when in immediate contact with the externals of wealth in a city. The contrast between all in that house and his own personal appearance, he began to fear would be too marked. "He was indeed decently dressed, but what might appear passable in the country might be very much below par here;" and as he looked down at himself in the light of the lamps, he thought his dress had a rustic roughness he had not noticed before; and for the moment he was glad he had not gone up the stoop and rang the bell. "He would go back to the stage-house and get lodgings for the night." But his *promise* came to mind! "He had emphatically told Evart that he would come directly to his house." He looked once more at the window, and thought he saw Evart pass, and with a desperate will ascended the steps, pulled the bell, and heard distinctly its summons from a distant part of the house.

A little time elapsed before the door was opened by a

colored serving-man, very neatly dressed, who, casting rather a cold look on Henry, as his eye glanced over his person, and rested on his portmanteau, stood with the door in his hand, without speaking.

"Does Mr. Evart Marston live here?"

"Mr. Evart! Yes."

"Is he at home?"

"Yes he's home. Any business with him?"

"I should like to see him."

The door was then more widely opened, and the servant stepped one side and said in a faint voice—

"Walk in, if you please, I will call him."

Henry stepped in, the servant closed the door, and without asking his name, or inviting him any further, left him standing in the hall while he went to do his errand, which Henry could hear distinctly announced to the inmates of the parlor, although in a very different tone of voice from that in which he had been addressed.

It may have been only imagination, but Henry thought he noticed a flush on Evart's face—otherwise his reception was as kind as he anticipated. In a few moments he was led by his friend into the room which he had seen so brilliantly lighted, and introduced to Mrs. Marston and a sister of Evart's—a young lady apparently about fifteen.

The mother seemed in rather delicate health, but her countenance had a very pleasing expression. She received Henry with as much cordiality as had her son.

"I am so glad," said Evart, as he stood beside Henry, holding his arm while the latter was answering questions by Mrs. Marston respecting her brother's family.—"I am so glad you have come in just as you have—for you know I could not tell when to expect you—and I had made an engagement with some of my friends to go to the theatre this evening—and I am expecting our carriage every minute."

"But perhaps your friend Mr. Thornton, would like to accompany you?"

"I should prefer to be excused, Mrs. Marston, if your son will allow me."

Evart was evidently relieved by this answer of Henry, although he replied—

"Well, I have no doubt you are tired, and might not enjoy

the play. But you shall not get off so easily the next time, and if it was not that it's a benefit night for our favorite player, and I had promised some of the fellows to go, I should stay with you by all means."

Henry, however, set the mind of his friend entirely at rest by saying, "That he should very much regret he came at all that evening, if Evart remained on his account."

There was no display of hospitality on the part of Mrs. Marston; but her easy, quiet manner, and her attention to his wants, soon made him forget that he was in a mansion which wealth had furnished, and where everything about him was so different from what he had ever seen before.

Soon after Evart left, Henry was invited into an adjoining room, where a comfortable meal, just such as a hungry boy would be very apt to fancy, was in readiness for him. And then, all through the evening, a pleasant converse was held with him about matters and things at Glenville, the house of Captain Marston; and from there to his own affairs, until the lady had become fully acquainted with his past history and present prospects.

"Well," said Mrs. Marston, "on some accounts, it is hard to be left alone, to make our own way in the world; and yet sometimes I feel in regard to my son that he is in more danger from the situation in which he has been left than if he was dependent upon his own exertions. Evart is a generous, good-hearted boy; but he is very social in his disposition, and has many acquaintances that I fear may yet do him harm, and I hope, as he seems quite attached to you, that you will try all you can to exert a good influence over him. He is easily influenced, and I believe has not yet acquired any bad habits."

Henry certainly had seen nothing in his friend which gave him any reason to think otherwise, and therefore promptly replied—

"I think you need not fear for Evart, Mrs. Marston. He seems to me to be all that is noble and good."

At what time Evart came home that night Henry knew not, for he was allowed to retire early. But Evart was not at the breakfast-table with them, and did not make his appearance until Henry had taken leave of Mrs. Marston, and was about to go on his way to deliver his letter of introduction to the firm in Broadway.

"Hold on, hold on, my good fellow. What are you at?" Henry was in the outer entry, and about to pass from the house, when he was thus accosted by Evart, who had just come from his room.

"I am on my way to deliver your uncle's letter, and try to get a place."

"You are going to do no such thing. Come, come, you have forgotten all our agreement together! No, no, you are not going to stir a step that way, yet a while; not to-day at any rate. Come in, come in, for I was out rather late last night and feel a little the worse for wear this morning; but shall be all right when I have had my coffee, so just come in."

It was not Henry's nature to say no, and he therefore followed Evart back into the breakfast-room.

"What do you think, mother! I have just caught this young gentleman in the act of giving me the slip. Why, don't you know, man, when you once get behind their old counters, you will be just the same as packed up in a box of dry goods! They will keep you tight at it from morning to night. You will never have an hour to yourself except Sundays, and I suppose you are too conscientious to make a holiday of that. No, no, come sit down! Mother, a little fresh coffee, if you please."

And Mrs. Marston ordered the servant to have some freshly made.

"You see, Thornton, I have been thinking over what we have got to do to-day, and I have got it all cut and dry. One day can make no kind of difference. To-morrow will do just as well to call on those gentlemen counter-jumpers as to-day! Do you not think so, mother?"

"Why, I suppose, my son, Master Thornton, feels anxious to ascertain whether he can have a situation there, though perhaps one day will not make so much difference. But where are you going, Evart?"

"Oh, mother, ways enough! We will tell you when we get home. This toast is a little burnt, and the coffee is not too strong, but no matter! The fact is, eight o'clock is too early for breakfast, one cannot trump up an appetite. How is it with you, Thornton?"

"Oh, I find no difficulty in that respect."

"I rather think, my son, you were up too late last night."

"Perhaps that is it! Any how, nothing tastes good. But I know what we will do, Thornton. At twelve o'clock we will take a bowl of turtle soup. Did you ever taste any?"

"I never have."

"Then there's a treat for you! A bowl of good turtle soup, fresh rolls and a bottle of pale ale. Well, mother, we had a full house last night, and Cooper did his best. He plays two nights more before he starts for Europe."

Mrs. Marston did not reply to many things her son said to her. She seemed absorbed in thought, occasionally casting a glance at his countenance, which to Henry looked very pale. Perhaps the mother thought so too, and had some fears as to the cause of it.

Had Henry acted according to his own sense of propriety, he would have lost no time in attending to the business for which he had come to the city. Or had his good friend Captain Marston been by him, he would no doubt have hushed Evart's reasoning very quickly, and started Henry off to attend to the main chance first. But no such happy influence was just then at hand, and too ready to oblige one who had acted in such a friendly manner towards him, he yielded—rather reluctantly, however, for his good sense told him that the path of duty was the safe path, and duty in his case was to procure a situation without delay.

At ten o'clock, as Evart had ordered, his fine horse and gig were in readiness, and the two young men prepared for their excursion.

Henry could not but feel that the contrast which his appearance made to that of his friend was somewhat embarrassing. He had on, indeed, his best suit, which answered very well in the country; but when brought into immediate contact with one who was arrayed in the very finest materials, fashioned after the newest style, the difference was too manifest not to be felt by him!

Whether Evart thought of the matter Henry could not have told, for not the least sign was given that the former noticed his apparel in any way.

After riding a short distance, Evart turned to his companion, remarking:

"Now, Thornton, you must not be alarmed, and I hope you

will not be offended! But I am going, in the first place, with you to my tailor's, and have you get a new set-out."

"Oh, thank you—thank you! but I dare not. I dare not by any means, until I get a situation and earn some money. I dare not take what I have on hand! Not now."

"Do not disturb yourself, my dear fellow, about the wherewith. Keep your money—what you've got—just leave this matter to me. Give yourself no trouble about it, I will manage all that."

You see, my good fellow, you have never been in the city before, and have no idea, or at least not a just one, of the great difference between matters here and at Maple Cove. People here go pretty much by appearance. You have got to look smart, hold your head up as high as any one; and let them know that you feel yourself of consequence. It is the only way; if you don't you will be trod upon pretty soon."

Henry did not believe that such views were correct, and would have argued the matter further with his friend, but as Evart closed the last sentence, he stopped his horse before a fine clothing establishment, jumped out and beckoned Henry to follow him. Once in the shop, there was no chance for him to make resistance, as Evart immediately engaged in a very lively chatting with one of the principals, who, in a few moments stepped up to Henry, and asked him to walk into the upper apartment of the store.

Evart accompanied him, and whispered as they went along, what color he thought would be most suitable.

"And don't you you say anything about the price, I will see to all that. Just do as I say for once."

Thus situated, it was almost impossible for Henry to do otherwise, for his mind was in such a confused state, between his desire to do right and his desire to please Evart, and his feeling that the whole thing was wrong, and yet if he refused the offer he might offend; or that possibly his present dress was a cause of mortification to the family, or at least to Evart. All these thoughts so confounded him, that he could only do as directed, but with a very unwilling mind.

That he was finely fitted out, there could be no mistake; and that it made a vast difference in his appearance, Henry himself could not but acknowledge, as he surveyed his per-

son in the large mirror. That he felt any complacency in the change, or any happier, as he saw his former suit being rolled up, to be sent in the course of the day to the dwelling of Mr. Marston, we must do him the justice to doubt, or rather, to give for him a decided negative.

As they were leaving the store, the gentleman who had waited upon them, called young Marston to the desk a moment. Henry could not hear what passed, only that the former remarked, "All right—all right."

We shall not attempt to follow the young men in their ride to various parts of the city; suffice it, that a little before three o'clock, they were again in Cortlandt street, and preparing for dinner.

As they alighted from the gig, Henry heard Evart request the servant to have "Scarecrow" in readiness for him by four o'clock.

Who "Scarecrow" was he had no idea, or what was next to be done he could not guess; but he had given himself up for the day, and meant to ask no more questions.

Mrs. Marston made no allusion whatever to Henry's altered appearance, nor was her treatment of him in any way changed. She merely remarked that a bundle had been sent home for Master Thornton, and she had ordered it to be placed in his room.

At four, precisely, Henry was summoned by Evart, from an agreeable conversation he was holding with Mrs. Marston.

"Come, Thornton, we must be off. Scarecrow is ready, and he don't like standing."

"Where now, Evart? And have you got that fast horse?"

"Oh, mother, no danger! Scarecrow likes to go; but I do not let him have his way until he gets off the pavement—all before him must clear the road then!"

Scarecrow was not a bad-looking horse; but could bear no comparison, in beauty of form, to the beast Evart had driven in the morning. He was rather of small stature—square built—with high hip bones—a short shaggy tail, and a very thick mane, which lay on both sides of his neck. His head was long for his size, and his foretop would have completely covered his eyes, if he had not learned to shake it one side.

At the end of each rein was a fixture Henry had never before seen attached to a harness, although he had seen something of the kind used by gentlemen in putting on tight boots. He thought probably it was a New York fashion, although he did not notice them on the reins with which Evart had driven that morning; he knew more about the necessity for them in the course of their ride. Aside from the peculiar shaking of his head, there was nothing remarkable about the travelling of Scarecrow while passing through the great thoroughfare of the city, so long as he felt the pavement under his feet; but no sooner did he pass from the round stones to the well beaten ground, than he began to manifest signs of uneasiness; tossing his head, laying his ears back, and requiring constant soothing by his driver, to keep him quiet. For a mile or so, or until the small rise of ground, known then as Sailor's Snug Harbor, was passed, Evart had contrived by means of coaxing rather than by a tight rein, to control his speed, but as they reached the level track, which spread far ahead from that point, in a moment the spirited creature sprang forward, rolling himself from side to side, and tossing his shaggy head to a sort of time with his flying legs. Henry had to grasp tightly to the rail beside him, while Evart, well braced, and almost borne up from the cushion by the main strength of his arms clenched tightly to the reins, merely said,

"Hold on, Thornton, he will have his own way now."

They were soon in the midst of other vehicles, and their drivers were doing the best they could; but they seemed to understand that Scarecrow must go ahead, and they made way for him, endeavoring to come along after, as fast as they were able. There was no apparent danger, for the beast was under perfect command of the bit, as far as guiding to the right or left was concerned, but appeared to heed the strain upon his jaws no more than if he had been held by a silken thread. After going thus for a few miles, Henry ventured to ask—

"How will you stop him? you are now pulling with all your strength."

"He will stop of his own accord as soon as he gets to Cato's, and not before."

Henry knew nothing about Cato's, but he was rather gratified to learn, there would be in time a cessation to their

rapid career. It was pleasant enough, but if anything should give way—a pin fall out, or a buckle break, where would they land?

And now a beautiful lane is entered; fine trees line it, a clear rippling brook crosses it, and moss-covered rocks lie close by their path, past which they speed at a flying rate. And soon a neat cottage appears on the left, and the ground rises as they approach. A well-beaten path winds from the main track up towards it, and, apparently without guidance, Scarecrow tears up the ascent, and in a moment stands quietly, merely giving an extra shake of his head, as if to say, "I've beaten them all."

Cato Alexander has been so well known to the past and present generation of New Yorkers, that for them any description of him or his establishment would be worse than superfluous; but as we write for many who have never seen New York, it may be as well just to say, that he was a respectable man of color, who, for many years kept a fashionable place of resort for pleasure-seekers in the city, who wished to spend an afternoon in company with those of their own taste. It was but a few miles from the city; the drive to it in former days was through delightful country scenery, and all the articles of refreshment which might be called for there, were of the choicest kind. Polite in his treatment of guests, and of an accommodating disposition, Cato was a universal favorite. There were also abundant means provided for amusement, and if these were made a bad use of, Cato did not himself feel responsible for that; his only object being to make a livelihood and something more, which in all probability he accomplished. All who stopped at Cato's were by no means the dissipated, nor was the character of the place such that respectable families would feel in the least doubt as to the propriety of a drive there. But to many a youth it was the stepping-stone to a downward course. Fast horses, nine-pins, and other devices for excitement; mulled wine in winter, and iced madeira and champagne in summer, were leaders to more dangerous drinks, until the deadly habit was confirmed, and the youth of bright prospects, and surrounded by all that might otherwise make life desirable, became a by-word amongst the multitude—a bankrupt in property and character, and sank to a premature grave.

No sooner had Evart and Henry alighted, than a crowd of acquaintances flocked around, to some of whom Henry was introduced. Many were young men whose appearance corresponded with that of Evart, although Henry was somewhat surprised to find that he took their hands, and seemed to be on familiar terms with some, whose appearance and language were very different from anything he had seen in Evart, or supposed it possible that his friend could willingly place himself in contact with. As their conversation turned almost entirely upon the merits of their horses, Henry was not at all prepared to engage in it, and was therefore compelled to be a listener. It was the first time he had ever mingled as an associate with those who seemed to think every assertion they made must be supported by an oath, and need it be wondered, that he felt himself treading upon forbidden ground. The atmosphere seemed tainted with evil; he felt the blood tingling his cheeks; a load had suddenly gathered at his heart; his spirits sunk, and if he could, gladly would he have gone 'away over into the adjoining fields and given vent to his feelings. It will be no pleasant task to go through a description of the scenes of the afternoon, either for our readers or ourselves, nor to be particular in description of the drive home. A crowd of vehicless of various kinds, might, for a time, have been seen tearing along the beautiful avenue, awhile in dangerous proximity—the drivers hardly conscious of anght else, but that they held the reins, and reckless of whatever was before or beside them. Henry was at first, from the novelty of his situation, more or less disturbed with apprehensions for their safety, but Scarecrow soon left the motley crew behind, and Evart, as yet, under no other excitement than that of youth, and the stimulus of having the fastest horse upon the road, manifested such skill in the guidance of his beast, that their progress to the city was rather pleasant than otherwise.

The impression, however, made upon the mind of Henry by this first drive to Cato's was by no means favorable, and he resolved to seize the first opportunity to persuade Evart to abstain from such intercourse. To him a walk of thirty miles would have been, in comparison, a pleasant recreation.

"Well, mother," said Evart, as he and Henry entered the parlor, where Mrs. Marston and her daughters were about to

sit down at the tea-table: "Scarecrow has beaten every horse on the road to-day. I would not sell him for five hundred dollars."

"I am very glad, my son, to see you safely back. I always feel anxious when you go off with that horse."

"Oh, never fear, mother; all I have to do is to hold on, and it is such fun to see the fellows trying their best to keep alongside. And then to see Scarecrow shake his head and settle himself down, and roll off his mile in three minutes—it's sport, I tell you! But, mother, we are invited out to-night! Bob McIntyre was out at Cato's, and he says Thornton and I must come to his house this evening. Some of the young fellows are to be there, and we shall have a nice time."

Whether Mrs. Marston was in favor or not of the proposed visit for the evening, Henry could not decide. She made no objections, and perhaps she could not well suggest any. It was a family of good standing, and one she had been in the habit of visiting; and yet, there can be little doubt, that mother's heart had some misgivings. The young friends whom her son was gathering about him were not just the associates to do him good. She could not say so before one so much a stranger as Henry, or perhaps she thought it might be a trial to Evart if she did. As yet she had never crossed his wishes, and we all know how hard it is to take the first step in direct opposition to those we love. She was a fond mother, although not as wise perhaps as could have been wished. Henry was quite satisfied with his various excursions of the day, and would have been happy if permitted to rest quietly that evening; but as it was probably, he thought, the last evening he would have an opportunity to gratify his friend, and Evart seemed so bent upon his company (young McIntyre having especially charged him "to be sure and bring his friend with him), that he felt it would be impolite to refuse.

It was another new scene for Henry to mingle in a fashionable circle of young people in the city. But his naturally observing mind and easy manners enabled him to acquit himself not only without any disparaging remarks, but much to the gratification of Evart, who began to feel proud of his young friend. The few accomplishments Henry had by his

own efforts acquired rendered him throughout the evening quite a favorite with all. Music and dancing, and lively chatting in the interim of refreshments, caused the time to pass quite pleasantly to Henry, and had it ended with these, he would certainly have felt that the closing scene of the day was quite agreeable. Soon after ten o'clock he was led away by Evart and a few of his young companions, just as some of those who had sisters present were taking leave for the night, into a more private room. It was in the back building of the house, and, as young McIntyre remarked, "was his own room where he could do as he pleased." Henry had heard of cards, and perhaps felt more shocked than he would, had he been reared where such games were common in polite life. Certainly he saw no evidence that any of the young men were conscious of engaging in anything wrong or dangerous. He did not wish to unite with them in their play, and pleaded his utter ignorance of the game; but his objections had no weight. They said "it was perfectly simple," and so indeed it was, for he soon found that by a little attention he could play his part as well as the rest, although not with the same expedition. To him there appeared but little meaning to the affair, and of little moment whether he lost or won. The stakes were small, and it was understood that at the close of the evening each was to have his own again; Evart remarked to him,

"You see, we don't play for money!"

Henry of course could see that; but there was something he could not see into, and that was why they all seemed so interested in the game, and the more so the longer they played; until at length some were much excited. Hard words were spoken, and language used which Henry did not suppose young gentlemen of their standing in society ever indulged in. It was past eleven o'clock when the party broke up. The money was all returned to the owners, and young McIntyre taking from his closet a decanter of raspberry cordial and glasses for each, placed them on the table. "Now boys, although we've had a little sparring, we must all take a glass of cordial, and show that we part friends."

"I say aye, aye," to that, said Evart, and "aye, aye," resounded on all sides. The cordial was tasted and highly praised, and one or two helped themselves to a second glass. Good feeling

seemed to overflow, and all parted in high glee after making an engagement to meet on another evening at Evart's.

It was 12 o'clock before Henry retired to his room, and as he threw himself into a chair a sense of sadness came over him, and a rush of thought quite unfriendly to sleep. He had of late formed a habit of reviewing the scenes of the day before retiring to rest, that he might not only recall favors received, but what errors in judgment he might have committed, or how in any way he had departed from those precepts by which he resolved to be guided.

Never had he been so at a loss to decide as to whether he had done right or wrong.

That the day had not been passed as he could have wished, his conscience was at no difficulty in deciding. The only question was, "Had he acted as firmly as he ought? Had he not suffered himself to be led by the persuasion of others in opposition to his own sense of propriety! Many excuses were ready, as they always are, to palliate our own shortcomings—and Henry had to look at things in different aspects before he could come to the conclusion, that he had been from circumstances, compelled to do as he had.

But still he was unhappy! He did not feel the same manly courage which he had been so conscious of for some time past. He did not feel the same self-respect which he had hitherto maintained. His fashionable garments gave him no pleasure. They had not been earned by his own industry. The sight of them brought to his mind a sense of obligation; he felt lowered in his own opinion; he was in appearance what he was not in reality, and he could not help the feeling that there was meanness attached to such false colors.

He had learned nothing through the day that he could think of, for which he would be the better. Profanity had polluted his ears, from those with whom he had associated! Trifling subjects had been the topics of conversation—and unmeaning, dangerous amusements engrossed the hours of the day and evening.

There was flitting through his mind, too, a consciousness of having neglected duty, in not attending to the delivery of that letter! He had not done what his hand found to do "with his might," and in spite of all the excuses which his mind readily suggested—he was not completely satisfied by

them. He remembered likewise the advice which his good friend Captain Marston had given him, and regretted most truly that he had in the least deviated from it.

Sleep was not easily obtained under such circumstances—nor did he awake in the morning refreshed.

But a new, bright day brought stronger resolves "to be steadfast in the path of duty."

Evart, as usual, was not up the next morning to breakfast, and Henry thought Mrs. Marston seemed downcast. Few words were passed at the table, and he began to feel that his presence was not agreeable, and resolved he would, immediately after calling upon the gentleman in Broadway, procure for himself a boarding place, whether successful or not in his application to them. He could sustain himself for a few weeks on the funds he had, and he would risk the future rather than be dependent upon hospitality, afforded no doubt as a mere act of courtesy.

As he arose from table Mrs. Marston spoke—

"Master Henry, I should like to see you a few moments."

And she led the way into an adjoining room.

"I wish to have a few words with you alone; please be seated. I suppose you are now going to look for a situation!"

"Yes, madam; and I am sorry I did not go yesterday."

"Perhaps it might have been as well. It may not, however, make any difference. But what I wish to say to you is, that I hope you may not think of looking for a place to board. I suppose you are aware that in general, merchants do not now take young men into their families. If you engage with them, you will probably get a stipulated sum as salary and provide for yourself.

"So Captain Marston has told me, madam."

"I was going to say to you that if you have no particular objections to remaining here, it is my wish you should do so; and one reason is, that Evart has taken a great fancy to you. I think I never knew him to feel so much attached to a companion as he does to you."

Henry blushed deeply as he replied:

"I am sure I cannot tell what I have done to gain his good opinion."

"Perhaps one reason is that he finds you are ready if you

see him doing wrong, to check him! You did so yesterday, did you not?

Henry remembered some little conversation which had passed between him and Evart on their way from Cato's.

"Evart told me about it; he is a frank, open-hearted boy. He does not mean to do wrong, but, as you see, is surrounded with companions, and many of them I fear are not calculated to do him good. But it is hard to break off from them. And it would be a great relief to my mind, and I know highly gratifying to Evart, to have you remain as a member of our family."

Henry could not foresee what special evils might result from yielding to this request, stranger as he was to the new life into which he was thrown. And he could think of no reason why he should make objections to an arrangement which was certainly a great favor to him; he therefore pleasantly acknowledged his obligations to Mrs. Marston for her kind offer, and agreed to do as she requested.

Henry is at length off, and on his way to the place which has been upon his mind so constantly for some days.

He had no difficulty in finding the store, for it was a distinguished establishment, and he had read the names several times as he passed through Broadway, while riding with his companion.

The presentation of his letter procured for him a kind greeting. The gentlemen accosted him very pleasantly, and even the tones of their voices made Henry's heart glad; he felt that he should like to serve them.

After a moment passed in reading the letter, one of them stepped up to him.

"It is a little unfortunate that you had not come a day sooner. From the tenor of Captain Marston's letter, and his account of you, we should have been very glad to have made an arrangement for your services, at least to have given you a trial. We have been in want of a new hand, and it was only yesterday afternoon that we engaged one. How long have you been in town?

Henry promptly told; he had to speak quick, for his feelings were too much excited to be repressed with ease. He told also the reason why he had not called the morning after he arrived.

"Aye, aye, my lad!" And the elder of the two gentlemen put his hand kindly on the shoulder of the youth. "You see, now, that there is nothing like attending to whatever we have to do in the way of business without delay! Business first, pleasure afterwards." But seeing that Henry already felt deeply chagrined at what had taken place, he changed the tenor of his address into a more encouraging strain. "But you must not be alarmed at the first mishap! I should at your age have done just so, and a little worse. I have no doubt you will remember this lesson; it may save you many a dollar, and when you get a chance you will work all the harder."

Henry would have thanked him for his words of comfort, but he did not just then feel as if he dare trust himself to speak. He was dealing with men whose hearts worldly prosperity had not spoiled. They could enter into all his feelings. They knew what was working in his young mind, and how good it was to have a friendly word and a helping hand at the right time, and the same gentleman who had been speaking, addressed his partner—

"Perhaps, Mr. Jessup, we may hear of some situation for this young gentleman, in the course of the day!"

"We may possibly, sir! I will inquire a little when I go out by and by. Are you particular as to the business?" addressing Henry.

"Oh! no, sir."

"Then call here in the course of the day, we will do what we can for you."

How sadly Henry felt as he retraced his steps through the long neat store, and saw the clerks busily employed behind the counters, we need not say. It was not merely a disappointment, it was a loss in consequence of his own want of firmness and decision. He was not merely unfortunate. He had missed a favorable opportunity to have begun his career with a long established house, where he felt very sure he would have had a fair chance to make his way, and that by his own neglect! For excuse himself as he might, his conscience convicted him of want of firmness in not doing what he believed at the time he ought to do.

He did not care to return immediately to Mrs. Marston's for fear that he might be again urged by Evart to go off upon

some excursion of pleasure. And pleasure, in the way Evart was seeking it, was very abhorrent to his feelings just then, nor had he any special aim in going anywhere. So he walked along among the crowd, indulging thoughts not very agreeable, although they may, by the deep impression they were making on his mind, become in after years, beacons to warn him of danger.

Suddenly he heard his name called, and looking round he saw Evart running up to the side-walk. A young man was seated beside him in the carriage. Evart sprang to the pavement and grasped his hand.

"Thornton, how are you! You fairly gave me the slip this morning. Have you been to see the counter-jumpers?" This was the term he invariably applied to the drygoods men, no matter how respectable.

"What luck?"

Henry told him how things stood, but from motives of delicacy did not mention all the facts in the case.

"No place for you, ha! Well, never mind, there are places enough; no matter if you don't get one these six months. You know you are to stay with us, so keep up a good heart. 'As good fish in the water as have been taken out of it.' You will get a situation, no danger of that. But, see here, have you got your purse with you?"

"Yes."

"Have you twenty dollars that you can spare until to-night? I have got out, and mother is short this morning!"

"Oh, yes, certainly!" And Henry opened his purse at once, and withdrew the very bill that Captain Marston gave him.

"I believe that is a twenty!"

"Twenty! All right—you shall have it this evening or to-morrow morning."

"Oh, no matter about that; you know I shall not want it just now."

And in a moment more Evart was on his way—Henry did not ask whither! He was but too glad that he was not asked to go with him. The loan he had granted was quite a relief to his mind; he rejoiced that in any way he could make some return for the many favors received from his friend.

As no time had been specified when he should call upon the gentleman who had kindly promised to make some effort on his behalf, further than "that he might call in the course of the day," he concluded to drop in at about one o'clock.

No sooner did he enter the store than he was recognized, and the gentleman who had made the promise took him a little one side into the less busy part of the store.

"I believe I have got a situation for you. But I must tell you—the firm is a very close, calculating, business concern. You can only have one hundred dollars a year! You cannot live on that and pay your board!"

"I am not obliged to pay board at present, sir." And Henry frankly told what a kind offer Mrs. Marston had made him.

"You are quite lucky, then! But let me see. Has she not a pretty wild son? Fond of fast horses, etc. You must take care!"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Well I hope you will! You must expect to work hard, early and late—keep your eyes open—and if they speak harshly to you—never mind—take it all in good part."

"I will, sir."

"Well then—come with me."

The manners of the gentleman to whom Henry was now introduced were in strong contrast with those to whom his letter had been addressed.

A few short questions were asked him in a rough, abrupt manner—the terms were mentioned—and on his assenting to them—he was set to work.

And here we must now leave him for the present, in order to carry on other parts of our story.

## CHAPTER X.

Mr. Vernon had never lost sight of the object he had in view, by gaining a friendly footing with Esquire Thompson and a consequent intimacy with his family. Many facts he had ascertained through the squire himself, and also by conversations with Louise from time to time; he had in an accidental way learned many little particulars which he carefully noted down. But nothing had he found out, as yet, which gave him any clew to the great fact which he wished to arrive at.

Occasionally he sent a letter to his friends the Marstons, but the purport of them was rather to lead their minds away from the subject entirely, and to help them bear their trial as a dispensation of Divine Providence which would never, in all probability, be cleared up in this world.

The reasons which Louise had assigned for her belief that Caroline Jeralman knew some things concerning her which others did not, had awakened in his mind, some very strange suspicions concerning that woman. And these had been confirmed by certain strange expressions which she had dropped in his hearing.

He had taken an interest in her from the fact that she seemed to be an outcast. Not that people shunned her or treated her with any unkindness. But she avoided society. She was seldom seen sitting down in any of their houses and conversing as people of her class are apt to do. She never appeared to take any interest in general gossip, but would leave the work she had finished, or take that which was put into her hands to do, and go on her way in silence.

It was at her request that Mr. Vernon had called the morning in which he was first introduced to the reader, and as we have seen, was prevented from hearing what she had to say. When he next called, which was a few days after, he found her not disposed to be communicative. And what appeared to him very singular, she was evidently unwilling to manifest the same interest for Louise, which had been so palpable at the time of her injury.

All this but increased his anxiety to probe her feelings. That there was some great burden upon her mind, he was very sure, for she had once asked him some rather singular questions as to the criminality of certain acts, "and what he thought of the binding nature of an oath taken to conceal a wrong deed?" He had answered her at the time in such a manner as he thought the questions demanded, without any idea that possibly she herself was implicated. But since his intimacy with Louise, new light broke into his mind, and he resolved, if possible, to know more of the secret history of Caroline. He became convinced, too, that she was not so simple minded as many thought her to be, and as he had himself imagined; and felt the necessity of approaching the subject he wished to introduce with some caution.

More than a month had elapsed since he last saw her, for he had been to the city and returned, and had been occupied with business at some distance from Stratton.

It was now the early part of September, and as an apology for calling on her, he made inquiry as to her means for providing herself with comforts through the winter. She thanked him, but said, "she thought there would be no danger that she should not be able to get the very few things she might need."

"Do you never tire of your lonely life, Caroline?"

"I do not get tired of it because of being alone. It seems most natural to me, it is so many years now!"

"How long is it that you have thus kept by yourself?"

Caroline paused a moment, either endeavoring to revive her memory, or to ascertain perhaps whether the inquiry was made with any design. Her eye was fixed on Mr. Vernon, but his perfect ease of manner, no doubt, gave her assurance, for she replied,

"Oh, it is not many years since I have lived in the same way, alone, as I now do. But you know a person may be alone, when living with others. Do you not think, sir, that it is all owing to the feelings of the heart, whether one feels alone or not?"

"No doubt that is true; sometimes an engrossing subject completely absorbs the mind, so that we take no interest in persons or scenes around us. Under such circumstances, we may be in the midst of company, and yet almost unconscious that any one is near us."

"I know that to be true."

"But in general, Caroline, it is not well for us to allow one idea thus to occupy our mind. It may lead to very serious consequences."

"But what if you cannot help it? What if it will stay there whether or no? Sleeping or waking—alone, or among people—all the time a-hanging at your heart."

"Sometimes relief is to be obtained by unburdening the mind, and telling our grief to a friend. Even the pangs of guilt are, at times, relieved by a confession of the crime."

The look which she gave Mr. Vernon was full of intense interest, as she replied,

"What! a confession if there was no power to put the thing right?"

"Yes, even then! For it has been found that persons guilty of the most heinous crimes—such as murder, have so suffered from the torment of their conscience, as to yield themselves up voluntarily to the law, finding a relief from confession, even in the prospect of death."

"Yes, I know. I have heard of such cases, and I do not wonder!"

Suddenly she paused, as if she was about to say too much. Mr. Vernon was greatly excited, but he endeavored to maintain an aspect of indifference. In a few moments she asked:

"But what if they could not tell?"

"That is supposing an impossibility, Caroline! Any one who had been guilty of a crime, and possessed understanding enough to feel remorse on account of it, could certainly make it known if so disposed."

"What, if they had taken a most solemn oath before God, that they never would tell, because, may be, other folks might suffer too!"

"Caroline!"—Mr. Vernon's manner was quite altered—"from the manner of asking these questions, I must draw the conclusion, that you are yourself troubled on account of some evil doing, either for which you are guilty, or about which you know, and are unwilling to make a revelation. I do not ask you what it is; but listen to me. If you are conscious that your silence is in any way continuing a wrong, which you or another has perpetrated; if you know that

every day you keep back this secret, it is the cause of anguish to some hearts. You are heaping up unto yourself a terrible judgment, and God will not be slow to bring it upon you."

"Oh, Mr. Vernon! oh, Mr. Vernon! Do, sir, please stop; oh, say no more. My heart is all eat up with pain and sorrow! oh, don't add to it."

"I have no wish, Caroline, to add to your distress, from whatever source it arises; but I greatly fear you are keeping in your own breast some secret that ought to be known, and consequently you are the cause of intense suffering, which may yet lead to the loss of life or the loss of reason."

She spoke not, but with her hands clasped, and her whole frame trembling visibly, looked down upon the ground, and Mr. Vernon continued—

"And are you willing thus to make not only one but many human beings wretched? Are you willing to break the heart of an innocent lovely young creature, and perhaps bring her to an untimely end, when one word of your mouth might alleviate her misery, and possibly fill her with happiness."

"Oh, Mr. Vernon! who do you mean?"

"It is not necessary for me, Caroline, to name the person! your own conscience is fully alive on the subject, and I now tell you that my own suspicions are aroused; you have already confessed enough to prove that you have been guilty of a great wrong, or have been an accomplice with others in so doing. I have been your friend, Caroline, and would not willingly bring evil upon you, but I have learned from your own lips some things that alarm me, and depend upon it I shall not leave the matter thus."

The tone of voice in which Mr. Vernon spoke, was in marked contrast with that in which he had usually addressed her. Caroline knew that his general deportment was remarkably mild; and she also knew that he was not a man to say what he did not mean; no doubt, too, she remembered some things, which in a moment of excitement she had uttered before Louise, and which probably had been told Mr. Vernon.

She sat down and wept bitterly. Mr. Vernon was intensely anxious to follow up the effect his words had produced, but feared to say more just then; and he remained a silent listener of this outburst of grief, in momentary expectation that

she would unburden her mind, and bring to light the secret cloistered there.

The effect produced by what he had said, was however totally different from his expectations.

As soon as Caroline had sufficiently recovered the command of her voice, she answered him in a manner that convinced him, that she was not to be moved by the motives he had suggested.

"Mr. Vernon, you have spoken hard to me, but I do not lay it up against you, for I know you mean well for others, and I don't believe you wish any ill to me; but you don't know me nor my trouble; if you did, I know you would not have spoken as you have. Whatever I know, or whatever it may be that is lying on my heart, I am as anxious to get rid of as any poor mortal can be. But I tell you now, once for all, suffering can't wring it from me; if it could it would have done it long ago, for I have suffered as no poor creature ever did, for many long weary years. You may bring me to justice, as you say; you may torture my body; you may take away my life; but my tongue will never, never tell what it would have told long ago if I had been free to do so."

Mr. Vernon was not easily turned aside from any course which he might have adopted for the accomplishment of a desired end; but the manner of Caroline assured him that she spoke words which came from her heart; and what she had uttered unfolded to him more than he had before conjectured of the peculiarity of her situation.

One more question he wished to ask, and he used as soothing tones as possible—

"Is there any hope, Caroline, that you will ever be free to make this communication, which you say you are so anxious to make?"

A moment she hesitated, and then, clasping her hands, and her eye raised to heaven, she replied—

"God only knows!"

A few days after this interview, Mr. Vernon received a letter through the post-office, written, indeed, in a hand not very legible, but sufficiently so to enable him to decipher its contents. It read as follows—

"I may never see you again. I go to try once more what

I can do, and see if there is any hope for me. I have done it before at the risk of my life. This may be the ending of me; but if it is, I should like you to know that I harbor no ill will for what you have said, because you don't know me, nor all about me. C. J."

From the tenor of this letter he surmised that Caroline had left the place, and on going over to her lone cabin found that it was deserted. The door was closed, but it opened on lifting the latch. There was nothing within but the rude materials of which her bedstead had been constructed. The bedding had been removed, as also the few articles of furniture which Mr. Vernon remembered having seen there.

On inquiring of the nearest neighbor, he ascertained that Caroline had left now some days. A few things she had brought there and asked them to take care of for her, and said, "if she never came back, or if they did not hear from her in the course of a month, they might keep them or give them away." She declined telling them whither she was going; she said "it was uncertain;" and that was all the information Mr. Vernon could procure; nor could he, from all the inquiries he had opportunity to make concerning her, find any one who had seen her, or that could give information as to the direction she took on leaving the place.

## CHAPTER XI.

On the old stage road leading from the town of Rye to New Rochelle there stood, forty years ago, a dwelling of more than common pretensions, known, for many miles round, as the "Tyrrel Place." It was situated at some distance from the highway, and approached by a broad avenue lined on either side by large locust trees. The entrance to the avenue was distinguished by heavy stone pillars with ornamented caps and iron gates.

Near to the entrance and within the high stone walls which inclosed the lawn in front of the mansion, might have been seen a small stone tenement of one story in height, whose roof rose but little above the inclosure, and which, no doubt, was designed at its erection as a dwelling for the overseer of the estate, but, at the date of our story, was used as a porter's lodge, for the iron gates were fastened by a heavy lock, and no admittance could possibly be obtained except by the hand of some one within the inclosure.

The mansion stood upon elevated ground, although not, properly speaking, on a hill, for the lawn in front and the adjacent fields for some distance presented to the view of the traveller almost a dead level; and yet, as the eye passed the mansion and surveyed the vast prospect which lay stretched out in the west, it was very evident that the plateau upon which the house stood was far above the outspread scenery beyond it.

The mansion from the road could be but partially seen through intervals between the trees, and yet the imperfect view gave an impression of substance and old-fashioned aristocratic taste. There was nothing fine or dazzling, but an appearance of solidity, ample space, and a general fitness in the dwelling and its appurtenances to each other.

It had, when originally built, been intended doubtless for a large household; for it had none of those attachments which, like an after-thought, we find connected with many country mansions—additions made as necessity demanded.

But the area inclosed beneath its roof seemed to have sufficient space for the accommodation of a larger number than is usually collected in a private family.

Large dormer windows, each with a sweeping roof of its own, on three sides of the building, heavy cornices under the eaves, and heavy mouldings over the windows and around the doors, were the only ornaments, even if they were designed as such.

Two immense trees of weeping willow stood at equal distances on each end, about midway between the front and rear, and with their wide-spread and drooping branches, added much to the imposing effect of the premises as viewed from the road.

We have given these few particulars merely to refresh the memory of our older readers who may have been in the habit of journeying in that direction. The house and all its appurtenances have long since disappeared. The elements commenced its destruction, and railroad engineers have completed the devastation; nothing remains but the stone fences and the porter's lodge, now a snug farm-house.

At the period when the scenes transpired which we are delineating, two females constituted the chief members of the family occupying the mansion. The elder of the two, a lady then far advanced in life, was properly the mistress of the domain. The estate belonged to her, and from her it took its name, "the Tyrrel Place," that being the maiden name of the lady, she never having made up her mind to change it.

She had always been noted as a person with some unpleasant peculiarities; among these were a proud spirit and a high temper. Perhaps on this account she had never married, either afraid to place a master over herself, or other persons afraid of placing a mistress over them. Whichever reason operated to keep her single is of no consequence now, nor was it at the time we are recording. She was becoming quite infirm, and was getting far advanced in life, so that for some years she had not been the administratrix of her own affairs.

Some seventeen years since, she had received under her roof a lady just past the heyday of youth, a niece, although rather called so by courtesy than for any real relationship, she being

the daughter of a gentleman who had married, for his second wife, a younger sister of Miss Tyrrel. This sister of Miss Tyrrel lived but a few years after being married, leaving also a daughter at her death—a lovely girl of nine years of age.

Strange as it may appear, for this pretty scion of her own house Miss Tyrrel seemed to have no sympathy, and transferred whatever affection she had to spare to the elder sister. That there was a greater similarity in character between the latter and herself all who knew them allowed, but many surmised that flattery and much pains-taking to gratify peculiar tastes had undermined the aunt's interest in her own niece—the more lovely of the two—and finally brought about a union, beneath the roof of Miss Tyrrel, of the elder sister and herself.

The immediate cause of removal from the house of her father—a gentleman of independent circumstances—was a violent antipathy which Miss Letitia Hasbrook, or Miss Lettie, as she was usually called, indulged, against the marriage of her younger sister. Some said it was jealousy, on account of the attractive charms which this sister possessed; and some said it was chagrin because of her own single state, as years were accumulating fast upon her; but Miss Lettie herself declared it was only on account of the low connection which her sister was about to form. She did, indeed, lay all the stress upon that point, and resolved, when she found her protestations were not likely to avail anything, to accept her aunt's invitation to make her house her future home.

As Miss Lettie had, on leaving her father's house, made some rash vows, in reference to never entering it again, it behoved her to use all possible means to gain a firm foot-hold in her new home. And very effectually she accomplished that object, for, at the time we are chronicling, and for some years previous, her word was law throughout the household and the whole domain.

Miss Tyrrel was now fast approaching the end of her career, enfeebled in body and mind; it would have been utterly out of her power to withdraw the reins of government, so long intrusted to her niece, even had she dared to do so. And as it was well understood that Miss Lettie had also been made sole heiress to the estate of her aunt, all who depended upon the good will of its owner—and such dependence was much

more common than now—were, of course, more or less solicitous, according to their circumstances, to please, in all things, the "young mistress," as she was styled.

Of all who obsequiously attended to her commands, none was so distinguished as old Robin Byfield, who lived in the little stone house by the gate, and kept its key by night and by day. And no one of them all seemed to have so much power with the "young mistress," and consequently carried so high a head among his compeers and had so little of their good will.

To account for Robin's power and influence many stories were put in circulation, but only privately among themselves. These stories never by any possibility could reach the ears of Miss Lettie, for she had studied too well the art of governing to allow any freedom of communication between herself and her domestics, especially upon personal matters; nor were they likely to reach the ears of Robin except from the lips of some reprobate who had incurred either his displeasure or that of "the mistress," and was consequently discharged. At such times, in the meting out of the delinquent's wrath, some ugly hints would be thrown out, such as—

"The devil will have his own yet;" or "you will pay pretty dear for your money when the devil gets his own."

Robin was at times compelled to hear such short sermons, and the only way to help himself was by getting out of the way as soon as possible.

Among the stories that were told, and by some believed, was, "That Robin had, some years ago, received quite a sum of money—they said a thousand dollars—for some service he performed for the special benefit of Miss Lettie." How the story originated, no one could tell; but that he had more than that sum of money on loan, here and there, was a fact well ascertained. Nor did Robin deny it; but always asserted that it had accumulated from his wages.

Another disagreeable story which circulated respecting him, was, "That he had, for some reason, driven away from her home, his only daughter." That she had left, was certain; and whether she had died, or was still living, no one then knew; nor could Robin ever be induced to give them any satisfaction concerning her.

The probability, as many thought, was, that Robin being

very arbitrary and tyrannical, where he had full power, he had so exercised his authority, as either to alarm or disgust the young woman; and to avoid all trouble from that source she had fled from him, and so successfully eluded his search, that he was really as ignorant whether she was living as they were.

There were occasional visitors at the "Tyrrel place." Some of the old families settled in that vicinity, and others at quite a distance, were at times admitted by Robin through the inner portal. But these visits were by no means frequent; and as no access could be had to the dwelling but through the entrance, of which Robin kept the key, the inmates were never troubled by strange travellers on the road, either rich or poor—not even peddlers being allowed the privilege of opening their packs and exhibiting their tempting wares.

To this rule, however, there was one exception. Old Sam Truesdale had a free pass through the iron gate, and although Robin would, at times, make objections, and endeavor to compel the man to pass on with his pack, he was not able to accomplish it. Sam would never take no for an answer. Robin had been ordered in his presence, by the "young mistress," "always to allow Mr. Truesdale the privilege of coming in whenever he happened along that way."

Why the privilege should have been granted him in preference to others, Robin did not know; and perhaps for that reason had taken a particular dislike to the peddler. Nor could Robin understand why it took so long to buy a few "nick nacks." He often said, "a man might have bargained for the whole pack, piece by piece, in the time the 'young mistress' had been buying a few dollars worth of his dear things."

But "the mistress" had reasons for detaining old Sam, as well as for her command that he should always be admitted.

Secluded as she was from intercourse with the world, although almost entirely her own fault, she had still a desire to hear of what was transpiring in certain parts of it; and from no other source could she get such direct and reliable information as from Mr. Truesdale.

His route lay through that part of the country, and

among those families with which, in her early days, she had been familiar; and although with some of them she would by no means have any intercourse; and her pride would not allow her even to ask Mr. Truesdale any questions concerning them; yet she would be very careful not to interrupt him, while in the progress of retailing his particular accounts of all he had heard and seen.

Miss Lettie would always be looking over the pack for something she could not find, and would be sure in the end to buy enough to compensate him for the trouble she had caused him in her search among his wares.

On the particular occasion, however, to which we have had reference in our introduction of Mr. Truesdale, he had been made the bearer of a dispatch to the young mistress, which at first she seemed almost unwilling to handle; it was such a very plain sort of a thing—being a small package in the form of a letter—the wrapper of coarse brown paper, and tied up with a tow string.

The name, however, "Miss Letitia Hasbrook," was quite legibly written on the outside, and she could not very well refuse to receive it, although she asked him in a very sharp, harsh manner as she took it into her hand:

"Where did you get this?"

"I can tell you about where I received it, madam. It was on the main road just beyond the bridge over Willow Creek; but who it was that handed it to me is beyond me to say; for she declined giving her name, and it is no one that I have ever seen before, much as I have travelled these parts the last twelve years."

"Why did you undertake to be the bearer of such a missive to me? It is from some beggar, no doubt, who thinks in this way to get round my orders to the gate-keeper."

And so saying the lady threw the unseemly thing back towards the peddler, who was just in the act of gathering up the folds of his pack preparatory to the strapping.

He appeared to be much confounded, not only at the behavior of the lady; but also, as to what disposition he should make of the letter. He picked it up, however, and straightening himself, kept his eye upon the letter while making his apology:

"It is unlucky for me, indeed, that I have had anything to

do in the matter; but I assure the lady it was none of my seeking. A decent dressed youngerly woman came up to me out of the lane that runs, as the lady knows, just beyond the brook across the highway: says she, 'are you designing to stop at Tyrrel place?' 'I am,' says I. 'I have a message here, which I want to be put into the hands of the young mistress.'"

"Did she say the 'young mistress?'" said Miss Lettie, quickly interrupting.

"She did, madam; and then I asked, 'who may I say that it is from?' I asked this question, my lady, for my heart misgave me that there might be something wrong about it. 'It will be of no consequence to have the name,' she said, 'the young mistress would know the name, and would, no doubt, be much obliged for the receipt of it; for it contained things of consequence for her to know.' I then asked her why she could not hand it to old Robin, and let him deliver it, and her answer struck me very queer: 'Old Robin might want to know what is inside of it; for he would know the handwriting on the outside, and he has no good will to me.' Well, thinks I, if this is all so, and it is what concerns the lady herself, it can be but reasonable to do as I am asked to. But what I am to do with the thing now, I know not."

Whether the young mistress was really affected with compassion for the dilemma of the peddler, or with a curiosity to examine the contents of the letter, we will not attempt to decide. She merely bade him "leave it on the table;" and glad to get out of the way, as he had now finished his business, the pack was quickly strapped, and he soon walking at a brisk pace down the avenue.

It was not long after his exit before the despised packet was taken up and its tow string untied. A letter, in the same handwriting as the envelope, fell out, and the lady quickly glanced her eye over it towards the signature, which consisted of two letters, J. B.

No sooner did she see them, than the color flew from her face, and she immediately took her seat. For awhile she let the manuscript lie on her lap—herself absorbed in deep thought—and then taking it up read carefully every word. And again it lay in her lap, while she sat and rocked herself

with that irregular motion which betokens some inward struggle. Then the bell was rung, and a servant maid soon appeared at the door.

"Tell Jupiter that I wish him to have the coach ready for me by three o'clock this afternoon; tell him to be punctual."

At the appointed time, the very plain though respectable establishment belonging to the Tyrrel place was in readiness, and Miss Lettie, arrayed in a very plain dress, entered the vehicle.

"Whare to, missus?"

"Drive to the east end of Bascom's lane, as far as the haunted house."

Jupiter was greatly astonished, and had it been towards evening, would almost have ventured to remonstrate. He now, however, merely opened his eyes so as to show more of the white than was natural, being very sure first that the lady was not in a position to take cognizance thereof.

Robin was ready the moment he heard the roll of the carriage, to open the gate, and was standing beside one of the portals with his hat in hand, when Jupiter was requested to halt.

"Robin, as soon as you have closed the gates, take your seat beside Jupiter; I may want you."

Robin well knew there were no questions to be asked as to why or where; he therefore did as he was ordered, and the carriage went on in silence towards the place of destination.

As it approached the spot, and Jupiter began to rein up his horses to one side of the road, Robin could not help exclaiming to Jupiter,

"You are not going to stop here!"

The only answer he received was a most significant shake of the head on the part of Jupiter and a peculiar twist of his features—very expressive indeed, but conveying no intelligence whatever to the inquiring Robin.

Accompanying this pantomime was a prompt order from the old black, "To get quick down and open the door for the mistress."

As the lady descended from the carriage she very quietly said,

"You can follow me, Robin."

Whatever reluctance Robin felt, he dared not manifest the least hesitancy, but at a respectful distance walked after the lady.

Just before reaching the house, which was an old dilapidated building, at some distance from the road and almost hidden from it by the scrub pines and birches which had grown here unmolested, the "young mistress" turned to Robin:

"You can remain here until I come out; or until I call you."

And then she walked forward and entered the building. Standing within the door of a back room was a female, who immediately withdrew into the room as soon as the entrance of Miss Lettie was noticed, and thither the latter advanced, and as she entered the apartment, paused, and fixed a steady gaze at the female, who was standing near the centre, with her hands clasped before her, holding her bonnet, which she had removed from her head. A low courtesy was all the salutation she made on the lady's entrance, and one glance from her eyes. They were then fixed upon the floor, as she stood waiting to be addressed.

"Is this really you, Jane?"

"It is myself, Miss Lettie. I hope I have not altered so but my lady can recognize her old servant."

"You were never a servant of mine, Jane."

"Not really just yours, although I served your aunt from my childhood; until that dreadful day which sent me forth a wanderer. I have served you though, Miss Lettie; that you can't deny."

"And you was paid for your service, and well paid. Leaving your place was a voluntary act on your part."

"I don't know as the past is worth bringing up. The money I have never touched. My heart misgave me, and I left it with my father. I dared not touch it. I am here now, not to bring up the past, but to ask you, as you value a poor creature's peace, to let me off from the oath which *you only can do*, Miss Lettie; and *you* can do it!"

"Stop, Jane. I wish not to hear one word on that subject. It can do no good, now. What has been done cannot now be helped, even if we wished to."

"Oh, but it can, Miss Lettie. The sorrow, and the tears, and the anguish of spirit which those have suffered, you know

of, cannot I know be recalled; but the evil can yet be repaired."

"What do you say?" and the lady spoke in a tone of voice that showed she was highly excited.

"I say, it can be repaired."

"How?"

"By restoring the lost one to her parents."

"Who can do that? No human being knows what has become of the child. Your father has assured me so."

"Miss Lettie, I know that I have made a bold venture, to come as I have, to tell you all about this matter. But the truth must out—at least to you. I know you intrusted the child to my father, and he was to give it to a woman who had been hired to meet him at the cross-roads. But when I come to think it all over, my heart misgave me. I had felt the warm breath of the dear little thing that nestled in my bosom and cried itself to sleep there. Oh! I could not! I could not, if I had died for it, have seen it carried off and thrown away to die or suffer! No, I could not! So I gave the gold which was put into my hands to my father, and told him to take it and let me have the child. And I did take it—and have never lost sight of it to this day."

"And do you dare to come to me, Jane, with such a falsehood on your lips? Why have you never mentioned this before?"

"I am telling you no falsehood, Miss Lettie. And the reason why you have never heard this story before is, that I have never been allowed to see you from the day I left your house. Twice have I applied to my father for permission to see you, and that he would help me in some way to get rid of my oath; and the last time he was so enraged that, for fear of my life, I fled away from the lodge in the night, and have never seen him since. But, oh! Miss Lettie, what good can it do any longer to keep the poor sufferer away from its parents? I will take all the blame to myself."

"And who else but yourself and your father are to blame? Who else has had anything to do with it?"

The woman fixed a keen and piercing gaze upon the lady. Her cheeks, which had been flushed with the excitement under which her spirit labored, became deadly pale. She

seemed petrified with horror at the bold disavowal which had just been made.

"And," continued Miss Lettie, "was it for this you begged me so piteously in your letter to meet you here? And after my condescension in thus yielding to a request of one who once served my aunt, am I to listen to your malicious insinuations? Do you know that I can have you seized and placed in the hands of justice?"

"I have no idea, madam, of trying to alarm you, or any one; nor am I to be alarmed by any threats which may be made to me. I have been through too many scenes of hardship and suffering to have any fears about myself. I once did a great wrong; but ever since my life has been one long, long repentance. I could not undo what I had done without breaking a fearful oath! Yet I have watched over the helpless one; wherever she has gone I have gone; sometimes in the same house, sometimes at neighbors, sometimes alone by myself. But never have I lost sight of her; nor will I ever, until God brings the day of my relief."

A sudden interruption here occurred by the entrance of a third person. Robin was naturally of an inquisitive turn. It was altogether such a mysterious affair, that he should be taken from his post, which he was never allowed to leave, especially when the gate was unlocked; and then that he should be stationed outside the house to act as a sort of guard, and yet not near enough to hear what was going on within—that his curiosity got the better of his prudence, and he had gradually drawn nearer and nearer to the premises, until he could plainly hear voices, and one of them he thought he well remembered.

A guilty conscience is a troublesome companion; and Robin began to have some fears aroused which had not troubled him for some time. Nearer and nearer he approached, until his suspicions were verified by what he heard. Trouble was brewing; and unable to restrain himself, he entered the house, noiselessly; and, to his utter amazement, heard charges made that might be his ruin. Without regard to consequences he kept advancing step by step, until he stood within full sight of one of the parties.

Turning to see what had attracted the notice of the wo-

man, Miss Lettie put on that terrible expression which her features could assume when she was aroused by anger.

"What business have you here, sir?"

Robin was not noted for courage. He was now thoroughly frightened. He dared not say why he had come, and was too much confounded by what he had heard, and by the fierce countenance there scowling on him, to invent a reason; but stood with his eyes fixed upon his daughter, and seemed about bereft of reason.

"Are you leagued with your daughter here in trying to bring a charge against me for a crime perpetrated by you and her alone?"

"I—I—I! madam!"

"Yes you, sir! Dare you make this charge?"

"I—I—I haven't made any charge, against anybody."

"Answer me to the point, sir. Had I any hand in it?"

"Oh, no, no, no, my lady! I never said so."

"Now begone, sir!"

Too glad to be let off thus, Robin lost no time in beating a retreat; nor would he pay the least heed to the outcry of his daughter, "that he would come back."

Thus triumphant in having browbeaten and put to confusion one whom she had some reason to fear, she turned with the same fierce countenance towards the other. But, to her surprise, saw that a great change had taken place in the whole aspect and bearing of the woman. There was no sign of fear. But in the sparkling eye and curling lip she saw tokens of stern defiance.

The lady was the first to speak.

"What more have *you* to say?"

"I have that to say, madam, which you may not wish to hear. But because you can terrify a weak-minded old man to the denying of the truth, you cannot keep off the terrible vengeance of God, who knows all about this whole case. But that you may understand how matters now are, I must tell you. There are those at work now in this business who will not rest until this whole thing has been traced out.

"That child, whom you would have consigned to death or infamy, has been taken care of. She is now a lovely maiden; she is beautiful; she is rich; she has powerful friends; and

it will not be long—mark my words—before that weak old man will be brought before those who will know how to get the truth out of him. Hints have long been about that he has done something that was not right; and when he is forced to tell what he knows"——

Had not the woman sprang at that instant and caught Miss Lettie, she would have fallen to the floor. Quickly seating her on a rude bench, she used all the means in her power to restore animation; at the same time speaking in a soothing tone, encouraging her not to be downcast, as things might be set right yet.

It was some time, however, before she recovered so as to maintain an upright position without help; and when she did, there was a total change in her manner, and in a tone of voice very different from that she had previously used, she said—

"Jane, I wish you to accompany me home. I must see you further about this business. I cannot say all I wish to, now."

"I fear the consequences, Miss Lettie, should my father suppose I had been taken into your favor. He is a desperate man when he is angry or alarmed."

"His anger would be of little consequence. I shall see to that."

Very unwilling to comply with the request, and yet, from the manner in which it was made, hopeful that it might result in accomplishing her great object, she at length assented.

As Robin saw the "young mistress" approach with his daughter following in the rear, he was sorely confounded. Things bore a very threatening aspect, and what might be the end of it he dared not think. With a move of her hand the lady motioned him to proceed to the carriage, into which, to his greater astonishment, he saw his daughter enter with the "mistress." Closing the door, he took his seat beside Jupiter, not heeding in the least the curious contortions which the latter caused his features to undergo. Robin was too busy to be amused by trifles.

As the carriage reached the gate and drove through with its inmates up the avenue, Robin bolted it as usual, and then repaired to his lodge and sat down to meditate on what he had seen and heard.

Robin was one of that class of persons who, although pos-

sessed of but a small portion of this world's goods, do so love that little, as to close their hearts against all other influences. The small share they have clutched not only blinds them to consequences, but makes them insensible to natural feeling.

We believe such to be exceptional cases, not only amid the mass of humanity, but among those who may be called "bad men," yet such there are, and they are permitted at times to show out the depravity of the human heart by the commission of heinous crimes for a paltry motive. Many a murder has been committed for as small a sum as that for which Judas betrayed his Master.

That Robin had been an unscrupulous man was too true. He had an insatiable love of gain. He had accumulated some hundreds; how much was only guessed at. It could not have been a large sum. Over a thousand dollars had been counted up years ago by some who knew, or pretended to do so. But whatever amount it reached, to him it was everything. In its accumulation he had not stood at trifles; and therefore hard stories were current about him; and, perhaps, suspicions that he was generally disliked, operated to produce in him distrust and dislike of others.

Robin well knew that when once some secrets of his life should be exposed, a hue and cry would be raised in his neighborhood and through the town, and he would be hooted at and made the sport and byword of the multitude. And there was even worse to fear than this—he had committed an offence against the law. His property might be wrested from him, his person confined among felons, his life made a curse —to him a living death.

Thoughts connected with such results began now seriously to agitate him; they enlarged, they branched out into different directions; they grew hideous. They attached themselves to present scenes, and persons—to the past hour—to Miss Lettie—to his daughter.

Beside himself two human beings were possessed of knowledge dangerous to his peace. The "young mistress" had hitherto treated him with consideration. He had felt strong in her favor. Now he had lost it. He knew her temper; he feared her wrath.

His daughter, too, he feared; but for other reasons. One check alone had prevented her from revealing the tale, even

should she herself suffer by the revelation. This he well knew had been her wish for years. Hitherto the bond which held her seemed secure; an impassable barrier kept her from all intercourse with the "young mistress"—that barrier, in some unaccountable way, had been broken through. They had been together; he had heard their conversation, and knew full well the object his daughter had in view. He saw how excited his mistress had been. He remembered the acknowledgment he had been obliged to make.

What argument had been used by his daughter to effect so suddenly such a mighty change. Was he to be made the criminal, and all the curse to rest on him!

Fear is sometimes as dangerous a passion as can possess the human breast; and Robin was now fully under its power. He was afraid of exposure to the world; he was afraid his treasures would be wrested from him; he was afraid his crime would be punished by perhaps imprisonment for the rest of his days.

Terrible suggestions began to present themselves to his mind. They may have come from the Evil One, but he cherished them. They grew more and more powerful in their awful persuasions.

He was alone!—No human voice, no human form was at hand, that, by the influence of human sympathy, might have acted as a foil to the thoughts of evil.

He laid plans; he thought them all out to every minutia of accomplishment.

The dark night has settled down, and the hours are drawing towards twelve; what he has determined to do must be done soon.

He has left his lodge, and proceeds with a quick step towards the mansion; and now he stands by its side, beneath the long branches of the willow, and his ear is listening for the sound of voices or of human footsteps. All is still—no; he thinks a footfall comes from a little distance, and a human form, he thinks, has just passed the hedge; it may be but the rustling of a night bird—he cannot say—he can neither hear nor see it move.

He is crouching at the cellar window, and his hand has reached the spring which secures it; his form has vanished into the dark recess beneath the dwelling, and no human eye has seen him enter.

## CHAPTER XII.

Louise had recovered from the effects of her injury, but from some cause unknown to the family her whole conduct was changed.

She kept much by herself, and with great reluctance came into the family circle whenever visitors happened to be at the house. Her proud heart could not forget the insult and injury she had received from her guardian; and although she never mentioned the matter, and allowed the version which the gentleman had given of the affair to pass uncontradicted, yet her opinion of him and her feelings towards him, had received a bias, which, with one of her temperament, could not easily be changed.

To Mrs. Thompson and the daughters she was respectful and kind, yet they noticed the change, and were troubled to account for it. But the peculiar conduct of Louise must not be attributed wholly to the cause above mentioned. Every month which she advanced in age increased her sensitiveness on the subject that lay so heavy on her heart. Of what avail was it that she had a home with those who stood respectably with the world? It only introduced her to circles where the uncertainty of her birth was most likely to operate against her. Of what avail was her wealth? It was a mere accident, that might procure for her certain attentions, but these would be accorded rather from some interested motives than for any respect to her personally.

Thus she felt and reasoned. She may have been wrong, but to her these conclusions were realities, and they deeply affected her. She felt herself an isolated being, doomed for life to bear a stigma, which, like the mark of Cain, would exclude her from those tender sympathies which her heart was so capable of enjoying.

The departure of Henry, too, had its influence to sink her spirits. Circumstances had drawn her heart towards him very strongly. We will not call the deep interest she felt for

him by its common name—for she was yet too young to know the full power of that holy passion—but it was very nearly allied to it. She thought of him in his lonely struggle with the world; she knew how sensitive was his spirit; how keenly alive to every emotion of pain or pleasure; how reluctant to put himself forward and maintain his just pretensions; and how ready to believe in the sincerity of every heart that exhibited any show of friendship. Her last interview with him had tended also greatly to increase her respect for his character. His independent spirit, scorning to receive, even from friendship such as she had manifested, pecuniary aid—choosing to trust his own energies, and to enjoy the satisfaction of rising by his own efforts—had elevated him in her regard. He was more to her now than he had ever been; and every place and circumstance associated with their past intercourse had peculiar charms beyond all else around her.

She seldom rode now, and then only when urged to do so; for some reason—she did not say what—she seemed to have lost all desire for that recreation. She would visit her pony every day and caress him, and often take him with her in her rambles; she loved to see him sporting at liberty upon the highway, where she might be walking, and to have him come up to her when she called, or see him leap the low stone fence to follow her into the fields.

She had her whims, no doubt, and many thought that this was one, and they called her an odd girl; but her remembrance of the fall she had, and all the trial of feeling connected with it, was associated with that which had once given her pleasure, and spoiled it effectually for her.

Mr. Vernon had never communicated to Louise the result of his interview with Caroline Jeralman; nor that he had received a letter from her; nor that he had been commissioned to make particular inquiries concerning herself. He was too wise and too kind hearted to do or say anything that might excite false hopes in one whom he knew had such strong feelings, and was so keenly alive to whatever had any bearing upon the great secret of her parentage.

He had not, however, been inactive. On his last visit to the city of New York, he had called upon the old people who had taken care of Louise during infancy, and the earlier years of childhood, and they had freely communicated to

him all they knew. But they could give no clue whatever, by which her origin could be traced.

He had inquired also, particularly as to what they knew of Caroline Jeralman; and the following narrative he noted down almost in the language of the old lady who gave it:

"As to Caroline Jeralman, sir, we remember her very well; that is, I think I heard the name of Jeralman once called; but not more than once or twice, at the most, I am sure—we called her Caroline. But before I go any farther, let me say one thing about her name. I have many times thought that the name she had here was not her real name; and so I told my husband. And what made me think so was, while she was living here a man called one day, when she was gone out to walk with the baby, and asked if Jane was in? I said there was no Jane lived here. 'Does not Jane Byfield live here?' said he. 'No sir,' said I. With that he seemed much frustrated, and said, 'he was told she lived here, and that he had come many miles to see her.' Well, that might have been a mistake, and I might never have thought of the matter again, had not Caroline manifested such strange feelings when I asked her after she came home, 'whether she knew any person by the name of Byfield—Jane Byfield?' She colored very much, and I saw there was something ailed her, so I said a man had called, who said he had come from the country and had been directed here—that Jane Byfield lived here. Caroline then said she did know the name. I said no more about it; but I have since thought about it a great deal. Well, now, to go back and tell you all I know about her: you see, just opposite to us there is a house which stands back in the yard—but it is in plain sight from our house—and the folks there kept a cow, and we used to get our milk there every morning. I was some younger then than I am now, so I used to take my pitcher, the first thing just at the break of day, and go over. Well, that morning as I opened my door leading into the front area, without seeing, I tripped my foot right against a basket, and I looked down and knew in a minute what it was, for I have had such tricks played on me before. You see I once nursed a great deal, and I suppose people thought maybe I was fond of children and would see that they wasn't abused. But my plan was always to send them right off to the poor-house—for if one

wanted to take a child to bring up, they would like to know what blood run in its veins—at least I should; for there is a deal of difference. But, however, I took up the little thing and went back into the house and called the folks, and there was a great to do. And the captain, he was clean took with it, and says he, 'Mrs. Bell, if you will take charge of it I will pay you well for your trouble and hire a nurse to tend it, and you shall have no trouble only just to have the oversight. At first I tried to persuade him off from the notion; but Captain Lovelace was a very set man, and he said if I would not take it, he would find some one who would. So, thinks I, who knows! maybe he is some interested in it, some way. But I found out to my satisfaction afterwards that he wasn't. He told me in his last sickness, when he knew that he must die, 'that the child was as much a stranger to him as it was to me, and no more related to him than it was to me;' and I believed him. You must know, he had boarded with us many years, and we knew him well; he was never married but once, and that was when he was very young; but he lost her soon after, and his heart seemed so set upon her that he could never make up his mind to marry again. Well, now to the child—as I was saying about the milk—I didn't go over myself then, but sent the girl that lived with me, and she soon came back, and the woman that lived there she came too, and another young woman with her—all came to see the child, and the young woman seemed to take a mighty fancy to it; and when I asked if they knew any one I could get to tend it, she said at once that she wanted a place, and that she was very fond of children, and would like dearly to come. So I looked sharp at her, and you know she is a very good looking person; and coming in so with the woman whom I knew to be a right sort of a character, thinking she was some kin of hers, I just right off made a bargain with her, and here she lived until the child was all of six years old; and then I thought there was no more use any longer to keep a nurse, as there wasn't much she could do for me. So I let her go, and she found a place in the neighborhood. But there wasn't a day that Caroline didn't come over to see the child; she seemed to be so lost without it. Well, by and by the captain died, and her guardian sent the girl off to a boarding-school, and then after that I saw no more of

Caroline; for a few days after the child went she called to bid me good bye; she said she was going into the country, and I have never seen her since, and it must be now all of five years."

The fall of the year was now far advanced, and Mr. Vernon had spent a longer period in the country than he was accustomed to; and chiefly on account of the interest he felt in this matter. But his presence was necessary at home, and he made preparations to return.

On calling to take leave of the family of Esquire Thompson, and especially of Louise, Mrs. Thompson requested the favor of a private interview with him for a few moments:

"I feel very anxious, Mr. Vernon, about our Louise. Perhaps you have noticed a great change, not only in her general behavior, but also in her looks; I fear she is not well."

"I have, madam; and it has caused me some uneasiness; for, to tell the truth, I have become much interested in the child. I fear she is too painfully sensitive in regard to her situation. If any means could be devised to turn her thoughts from the channel in which I fear they are running, it might be well to adopt them. How would a change of place and scenes answer, do you think, madam?"

"I think, Mr. Vernon, it would be of great service. But we have all been thinking how it could be brought about. She is averse to mingling in society, and especially to being thrown into new circles. She dreads the terrible questions which would naturally be asked; and you know many persons allow their curiosity to get the better of their judgment, and even if they are aware how peculiarly she is situated, make such inquiries, or express their feelings in reference to it; which, to one so full of sensibility as dear Louise, is absolutely tormenting."

"I know all the difficulties of the case, Mrs. Thompson, and that you judge correctly. She needs to have a change, and yet not such a one as would expose her to the trials you have mentioned. You are aware that she has communicated with me as to some of these annoyances, and I have told you how I usually treated her case, and what advice I have given."

"We know, Mr. Vernon, that Louise has the utmost confidence in you as a friend; and we rejoice at it. I believe,

too, she esteems you more highly from the fact that you tell her plainly what are her faults. She has a noble spirit, although not always under proper subjection."

"How would it meet your views if I should propose to her that she accompany me to the city—say for the winter. I live somewhat retired; my sisters see very little company, and I am confident they will enter heartily into our views in regard to Louise, and would much enjoy the society of a young person like her. There are many opportunities for diversion in the city, you know, which may be enjoyed without mingling intimately in society."

"I certainly approve the measure most cordially, and I know my husband will also—if it can only be accomplished by gaining her consent."

"Will you, then, authorize me to propose the measure to her?"

"By all means, Mr. Vernon; and we will do anything to second your invitation."

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Louise than the proposal which Mr. Vernon made to her, very soon after the above-mentioned interview with Mrs. Thompson. And when he told her that her guardians fully approved the measure, there was a lighting up of her beautiful features, such as Mr. Vernon never before noticed. He had not become acquainted with Louise until the shadow which involved her, had thrown its chill upon her heart.

Aside from the desire to get away from the present scenes surrounding her, it seemed to her a happy circumstance to be under the sole care and guidance of one so wise and good as Mr. Vernon—in whose affectionate interest she had perfect confidence, and to whom she could tell all her feelings without restraint.

There was also to her, now, an attraction to the city of New York which she had to no other place. Henry was no doubt there—under what circumstances she did not know. "He was a stranger and might be suffering trials to which one alone and friendless would be peculiarly exposed. She might meet with him—she could take the place of a sister—she could introduce him to a powerful friend in Mr. Vernon, who would most certainly take great delight in giving such aid as might be necessary to one so deserving as Henry."

These and many more like thoughts at once took possession of her mind; her heart grew lighter; she forgot herself—she made no calculations as to the possibility of change in Henry. Her faith in him was as perfect as it could have been had he passed the dangers of youth, and by years of steady progress in the path of virtue, proved the integrity of his heart. She would as soon have doubted whether Mr. Vernon might not prove false or unworthy, as the youth who had always presented to her such a pure and lovely aspect. Blessed confidence of early years! how strong! how free from doubt! Alas! that it should so often be destroyed by the experience of riper years!

A few days were sufficient to make all the preparations necessary for the departure of Louise, but even in that short period a great change was manifest in her appearance and demeanor. Her bright eye had assumed its former lustre, and the roses again adorned her cheek, and her step once more was elastic, quickened by the power of those bright visions which the eye of youth so clearly sees, but which for some months had ceased to beguile the heart of Louise.

Mr. Vernon travelled in his own carriage, driven by a servant who attended him on his excursions to the country. His most direct route would have been the regular stage road, but as that passed the mansion of his friends the Marstons, and as for peculiar reasons he preferred not just then to make them a visit, he therefore made a circuit of some miles rather than risk any unpleasant feelings by passing their house without a call.

It was on the second day of his journey, and near the middle of the day, when his carriage halted at a tavern not far from the town of Rye; and while his servant was employed in watering the horses, Mr. Vernon stepped into the house to say a word to the landlord, whom he well knew.

"Well, my old friend, Hunter! you keep stirring yet I see—all well?" At the same time giving his hand to an old portly man who had just risen from his seat in the bar-room to greet his visitor.

"All well, I thank you, Mr. Vernon—all well; though I must say I don't feel quite so nimble as formerly—glad to be able to be about, though."

"No news I suppose this way, Mr. Hunter? Not much

stirring. You seem to be all very quiet along the road here. It is a number of years since I have noticed any alterations."

"Well, sir, we don't change much—jog along after the old sort; but there has been a sad affair happened lately; you must have heard of it?"

"What affair, Mr. Hunter?"

"Haven't you heard that the Tyrrel place is all burnt down?"

"The Tyrrel place burnt down?"

"It is sartain true, sir—gone to ashes?"

"No one injured, I hope?"

"Well, it is not so bad as it might have been, for the servants got the old lady out; she wasn't burnt, but the fright, and one thing and another had such a hold upon her, that she died the next day. The servants were pretty nimble or they would have all gone for it; but the 'young mistress,' as they call her—Miss Lettie Harbrook, you know her well, or you used to, has been pretty badly hurt though. You see she jumped from a window, and one of her limbs was broke, and they think she is hurt inardly, some way. They have got her into the old lodge by the gate, for the house was all burnt to ashes—nothing but the chimneys standing."

"That is sad indeed, Mr. Hunter! sad news indeed! Why, I thought of calling, just to pay my respects to them. And the old lady is dead! and Miss Lettie; she is not dangerously hurt, I hope?"

"I can't say as to that, but the doctor stopped along here this morning, and he said he was most afraid it was going to be a very ugly job, that he should be surprised if it wasn't the finishing of her."

"How did the fire happen, Mr. Hunter?"

"Well, there is no telling just how it did happen; some think it was set afire; but I don't know."

"Set on fire! By whom?"

"Well, you know, they have been queer folk; they have ruled with a pretty high hand there—that is, of late years. Miss Harbrook has, you know, had all to say about things, and she has been hard upon the servants sometimes, and is a very unreasonable person when she gets her temper up—so

they say—and then there has been always some queer stories about her and old Robin Byfield. It has been said that Robin, years ago, had done something or another of some kind of deviltry for her, and that his pockets were pretty well lined for the job. What it was nobody seems to know, or don't like to say. But Robin had more money than folks thought he could have come by honestly, and I guess sometimes they twitted him of it.

"Well, it seems old Jupiter says, there has been a great turn up of late between Robin and the young mistress. She ordered him round, and had even threatened him with being turned off. But, howsomever, Robin is gone; he ain't no where to be found, and he has left everything they say—all his money and everything—clothes and all—and gone they say, the devil only knows exactly where; and some believe he meant to scorch the whole on 'em. But it is an unlikely thing to my mind, that he should have done so, old sinner as he is! He loved his money too much to go off and leave that; there is some mystery about the business I can't unravel."

"Does Captain Marston know of this? Mrs. Marston is half-sister to Miss Lettie."

"I know that; the captain and his wife were here only three days ago. Word was sent to them, you see, and they came right on, but deuce a bit would she see them. She sent them word that they need not trouble themselves about her; she could live or die without them, and she wouldn't see them no how. So they just saw to the funeral of the old lady, and did what they could to see that Miss Lettie was taken care of, and then when they found there was no use in staying here, they went on their way home. She's a hard case I tell you—a hard case." And Mr. Hunter, putting both hands on the arms of his chair, resumed his seat.

A multitude of thoughts crowded within the mind of Mr. Vernon while listening to the story of the old landlord. Thoughts which uo one who was not in possession of some items of intelligence which had been gathered from various sources, could have indulged; not one of them, however, dare he breathe to any human ear. One resolve, he at once determined to put into execution, and that was, if possible, to have an interview with Miss Lettie.

He had always been on fair terms with her, and it had been whispered among those who knew somewhat how matters stood with that lady, that she had been so favorably disposed towards James Vernon, that had he offered himself, he would not have met a refusal. He never had offered himself, for reasons, no doubt, all sufficient to his own mind; but he had ever been treated by her with marked respect and attention.

He believed she would not refuse to see him now; at least, as an old friend, he could not do otherwise than make the attempt; besides, there were other reasons which urged him to it.

The place where she lay was distant but two miles from the tavern, and in a few minutes after receiving this account of matters from Mr. Hunter, the carriage was rolling along on the picturesque road that opens to the traveller, after leaving Rye, on the way to New Rochelle.

Soon the ruins of the old Tyrrel place were visible, and Mr. Vernon pointed to Louise the scene of the fire. The blackened chimneys could be seen at intervals through the trees, with the large willows standing on each side, and their drooping tendrils hanging as in silent sorrow over the sad catastrophe.

"It must have been a beautiful place," said Louise; "what a pity! How did it happen?"

Louise had not heard the conversation between Mr. Vernon and the tavern-keeper, for she chose to remain in the carriage.

"It was, indeed, a pretty place; its situation was commanding. The house was finely built, and everything in excellent condition, and there was wealth enough to keep it so; but I fear there was little or no happiness enjoyed by its possessors. Happiness does not always accompany wealth—do you think it does?"

Louise turned her bright eye full upon Mr. Vernon.

"It only aggravates the misery of our condition; that is, under certain circumstances."

"There were no circumstances in this case, however, beside a corruption of the heart. They made their own unhappiness; ungoverned wills, impetuous tempers, and a morbid idea of their own importance, not only destroyed their peace,

but, I fear, have been the cause of much distress to others. We shall stop here for a short time; one of those whom I have had reference to, lies at that small house you see near the gate; she is dangerously ill; I wish to see her if possible. You can remain in the carriage, if you please, or get out and stroll a little about the grounds. You can stop at that gate, Stephen." This last order was addressed to his servant.

As the carriage drove up to the gate, an aged black came out from the lodge, and stood ready to open if neceesary, and Mr. Vernon at once recognized him.

"Well, Jupiter; you alive yet, eh!"

"Massa Vernon! can a be! sure nuff;" and in a moment the gate was thrown open.

"How is the 'young mistress,' Jupiter? Sad doings here I learn."

The old man shook his head, and stepped up towards Mr. Vernon, who was assisting Louise to alight, and answered in a very low tone:

"Sad doin's—sad doin's, Massa Vernon! The old missus is dead and buried. She clean killed up wid de fright, and went off jist like a pop corn; and de young missus is goin', I guess, to de long home. She's dreadfully hurted, somewhere or nudder—de leg is all broke to pieces, Massa Vernon, and de doctor say she hurt inside somewhere—no tellin' where—but she look bad; de cheek is all sunk in, and de eyes is very big, and starin', Massa Vernon, and she speak softly, and she groan very much—she very sick woman, no mistake, Massa Vernon."

"Who is with her, Jupiter?"

"Well, der ain't no one now but my old Bess and me. You see, Massa Vernon, de oder servants hab all run off and cleared de coast entirely. So soon as de old missus was buried, dey didn't feel no 'tachment, you know, to de young missus. I can't tell you all 'bout de business, Massa Vernon. 'Tis pretty long story; but so it is. Old Bess and me, we stick to de last."

"Where is Robin, Jupiter?"

"Oh, Massa Vernon, dat am de queerest of de whole ting. Robin ain't nowhere to be found. He leave his house, and his clothes, and his money, and all tings what he got, and he vanished away like de fog. Robin very strange man—he no

good man, neider; but me never tink he run away and leave ebery ting what he got behind him—remarkable strange ting dat, Massa Vernon, I *'sure* you."

"I should like your mistress to know that I am here, Jupiter, and would be glad to see her, if agreeable to herself."

"Me speak to Mam Bess right away." And Jupiter again entered the dwelling. In a few moments he came out and beckoned Mr. Vernon to come in.

There were two rooms on the ground floor opening into each other. In the back one lay the sick lady; her bed in front of the passage between the rooms—no doubt for the benefit of air.

A great change had indeed taken place in the sufferer. She had been in her youth, if not handsome, yet what might have been called a showy person. Of fair skin, with considerable color when excited by conversation, a remarkably fine head of hair, bright eyes, and a mouth that could smile most agreeably when she was really pleased; but when her features were at rest, a close observer might easily have imagined, from certain distinctive lines, not noticed when lighted up from any agreeable cause, that the expression of anger and even furious passion might be strikingly displayed, and under such circumstances that few persons would care to look upon it. These marks were now more clear than ever. Her high cheek-bones throwing their shadows on the hollow cheeks, the deep marks upon the brow, the wild, staring, bright eye, and the wide mouth with deep furrows at each side, bore unmistakable evidence of malignant passions. They had stamped their impress, and there they must remain until corruption and the worm had done their work.

Mr. Vernon almost recoiled as he entered the apartment, and for a moment his thoughts were too busy to allow him to speak.

The strange contrast—from health to a deathbed; from luxurious surroundings in a noble mansion to a rough couch in a bare and mean cottage. He was not indeed surprised, but only filled with wonder at the mysterious workings of that Providence which, he believed, had for just reasons brought the proud low, and taken the crafty in their own snare. But he felt that judgment belongeth not to man. It

was not an hour for a fellow mortal to use an upbraiding word, or even to indulge a hard thought.

As he approached the bed, a hand was extended, and as he took it the face was covered. He felt the nervous tremor that was agitating the sufferer. Memory, he believed, was at work, bringing back days long since gone by—days of comparative happiness. Or perhaps the hour of trial was working contrition in the heart, and softening it into love and pity. Perhaps feelings long indurated were yielding to the touch of sorrow, and nature at the last asserting her rightful power. Thus he fondly hoped, as he stood, and for some moments in silence held the hand she had given him.

At length he spoke.

"I am heartily sorry that I find you here, Lettie, and under such circumstances."

"I am glad you are here; sit down by me. They tell me I must die!"

Mr. Vernon drew a chair to the side of the bed, and had just taken his seat, when suddenly, as by the impulse of some new and violent emotion, she threw the hand which had veiled her face, with apparent passion, upon the bed, and exclaimed:

"Die—die—die! I do not believe it. Do I look like dying?"

"You are much changed in appearance, Lettie. You must have received a violent shock to have caused so great an alteration in so short a time."

"But do I look like dying? I wish to know—to know the truth, and for particular reasons. You always told me the truth. Tell me now."

"I think you are very ill, Lettie, and it would not surprise me, from what I hear of the manner and extent of your injury, if it terminated fatally."

"That is not what I want to know. Do you say that I cannot recover?"

"I cannot say that; nor, from what I hear, does the physician say so. I have only heard that he expressed doubts as to the probability of your getting up. Your life, Lettie, is in the hand of God. If your peace is not made with him, or you have anything to settle with your fellow-creatures which should be done while in life, and in the possession of your

reason, I most earnestly advise you to attend to it without delay."

"If I only knew that I was certainly to die!"

What more she was intending to say was suddenly arrested by a heavy groan and a gasping for breath, while at the same instant her hands were thrown wildly up and then fell heavily upon the bed. Mr. Vernon called quickly for help, for he supposed she was gasping her last.

Old Bess, who had left the room as Mr. Vernon came in, was standing outside the house, talking to Louise, and telling her all about the scenes which had transpired at the burning of the house. Hearing Mr. Vernon's call, the old woman hurried in, and Louise followed her, thinking that she might possibly render some aid.

"Oh, dear, she's gone off again! She's got another of them there spells! You see, sir, they come over her every once in a while; you'd think she was goin' to die right off; and the doctor says he thinks she will go out of the world in one of them yet. Here, do, miss—you rub this hand and arm as hard as you can; open both the doors, Mr. Vernon, please do."

While giving these directions, the old woman kept one hand engaged in fanning and the other in rubbing, both which exercises, she being very fleshy, and the weather somewhat warm, caused her to be sadly straitened for breath.

"Oh, de lors! If this is to be the way, me can't stan' it much longer. Open de windows too, Massa Vernon, if you please. Here, my young lady, just hand me de camphire. Dare! she twitch a leetle; she come to by and by. Oh, de lors, what a time it is! Can't stan' it long so—must have help. But you see, Massa Vernon, she can't no how bear de neighbors; no, nobody but old Bess and Jupe. And Jupe ain't good for notin' but to drive de horses; he dreadful feared of dying folks."

Louise had procured the camphor-bottle and returned to the bedside, and commenced again rubbing the hand and arm. She knew not what else to do. Mr. Vernon stood by her side, and was intently looking at the pale sunken features of the unhappy woman. He felt confident that nature was giving way, and that death had already set his mark upon the victim.

Soon there was a slight groan and one or two long breaths —and again the bright eyes, now darker by contrast with the pale features, were opened—and for a moment they rested upon Mr. Vernon, and then glanced at the others beside him; in an instant her whole frame shook as under the power of convulsions. She glared wildly at Louise, and clutched Mr. Vernon's arm with both her hands—pulling him down to her:

"Who is it? who is it?" She spoke only in a whisper, but with an earnestness that alarmed him. At once he motioned to Louise that she should leave the room.

"Tell me who is that; who have you brought here? Send her away—do you hear!"

"She has left the house, Lettie. Calm yourself; you are very weak; you are easily excited. She merely came in to render assistance to you; try to compose yourself."

"But tell me, James Vernon, who she is? Oh! oh! oh! must it be so! Can I not die in peace? tell me who that is?"

"She is a young lady, going with me to New York. I did not imagine that a strange face would thus disturb you."

"Strange face! That face is not strange to me; it is imprinted too deeply on my mind—too deeply! Bess, will you go out? I wish to speak to Mr. Vernon."

Old Bess lost no time in obeying the order; she was but too glad to be released from duty. Mr. Vernon seated himself by the bedside, saying at the same time all he could to calm the excited sufferer.

"Do you know who that is, James Vernon?"

"I have told you, Lettie; she is a young lady, a friend of mine, who is going with me to spend the winter with my sisters in the city."

"Where are her parents?"

"She has no parents, that I know of."

Large drops gathered on the brow of Miss Harbrook, as she heard this reply, and again she began to pant for breath.

"Oh, if I knew I was to die! Tell me honestly; what do you think?"

"I think, Lettie, that you are very ill; much more so than I supposed when I first saw you. And as an old friend I beseech you if you have anything to do or say that should be done or said before you die, lose no time."

"But, if I should live?"

"Lettie, I have ever been treated by you with confidence; can you yet trust my word?"

"I can."

"I will say to you, then, make what communication to me you think proper; anything—anything that will relieve your mind. If you are taken away, I shall make no improper use of it; and if you recover, I will divulge nothing concerning yourself, without liberty from you to do so. But I warn you to leave nothing unsaid which you ought to reveal, or which you would wish had been revealed when you come to stand before the great Judge of all the earth."

"I believe you; I think I shall die; I feel that my strength is hourly leaving me; strange feelings come over me very often. Oh, I have much to do—I know that I have—why could I not have thought of these things before? Oh how strangely different I feel! A few days since, I refused to see Caroline and her husband. My wretched passions! I shall never see them now! Why have you not hated me as well as the rest?"

"Perhaps, Lettie, you have misjudged the feelings of others."

"Perhaps I have—misjudged—perverted—mistaken the whole value of life."

There was quite a pause now, for her strength seemed to be failing, and the words she had already spoken were uttered in very feeble tones.

Mr. Vernon was deeply agitated. He had, for many years, indulged suspicions; and now he believed from many circumstances, that they were well founded. But the *truth!* the truth! How should he come at it? Never, he feared, if she died without revealing it. It would not do for him to appear too urgent, and yet there was danger in every moment's delay.

At length she asked,

"Can all sins be forgiven?"

"They can, if repented of."

"But that is a great thing—*to repent!* I know full well what it implies; a sorrow for it; a hatred of it; a love to all that is the opposite of evil; a perfect reparation, where we have done injury to others. Oh, it is too late to do all

this! Feelings of the heart cannot be changed just at our will; but evils can sometimes be repaired. What I have done, James, is *beyond remedy*. I do feel sorrow for some things; I wish I could undo them by merely asking forgiveness. I could do *that* heartily now; *but to repair the evil is beyond my power*. In that burning house one human being perished, who alone could have revealed the mystery, and, perhaps—yes, I have no doubt she could have replaced a lost treasure."

"How do you know that, Lettie? I have been told that all the inmates of the dwelling escaped without injury, except yourself."

"I know more than they do. She was there, but they knew it not; she was in a room that opened from mine; the door was locked and she could not escape. In my confusion to save myself, I forgot to unlock the door; and after I jumped I knew nothing until the next day. No; she has perished. I am guilty of that death; but not designedly. I locked the door because I feared her."

"Who was it, Lettie?"

"You never knew her; you have never seen her here; she has been away for many years. Jane Byfield could have repaired the evil. No human being can do it now; and I knew not that *she* could, until the very day before. But tell me more about that young girl whom I saw standing here; my mind runs on her; her image is painted on everything about me. What does it mean? Why does that face bring back the past? Oh, the past! Death is in it; hell is in it!"

Completely exhausted by the effort of speaking and intense agony of mind, again she lay with her eyes closed and her breath flying back and forth with fearful rapidity. Mr. Vernon arose and commenced fanning her.

"Not too hard, James; my breath"——

And in a few moments she again spoke:

"Sit down, James."

And resuming his seat, he began to say such things as he felt ought to be said to one so near the grave; occasionally she replied in the affirmative, with a simple "yes." At length, after recovering her strength in some measure, she said:

"Yes; what you say is true—all true; but first, you know, what in me lies to do, I must do; and I must do that before

I can hope that any prayer I may offer will be heard. 'If thou bringest thy gift to the altar and then rememberest that thy '"—— she paused. "That is what I mean."

"That is true, Lettie; you are right."

"Close the door." He did as requested.

"Have pity upon me! Do not spurn me, nor leave me in disgust! Try not to hate me! And now hear what I have to say."

He leaned his head upon his hand and rested it as near to her as possible, that he might catch every word. It took some time, for she had to pause occasionally for breath; but she ceased not till the sad story was fully told.

"And now I wish to do all I can. Tell them I most heartily grieve for myself and for them. They must forgive me for their own sakes. And should she ever be found, whatever property I leave I wish should go to her. All here is mine now. I have made no will. Go at once to my lawyer; have it arranged; bring him to me, I will say what he is to do. I must have it all left at your disposal; I know you will do what is right."

As Mr. Vernon saw there was no prospect of continuing his journey that day, he drove back to the tavern and left Louise there. He knew the family to be respectable, and felt no hesitation in placing her under their care for the night.

When all worldly matters had been arranged, and everything done which the dying one could do to repair the evil which her unhallowed passions had brought about, Mr. Vernon again took his seat beside her bed, and did what he could to lead her thoughts aright, and to hold out to her the consolations of the gospel to the truly penitent. How well the spirit was prepared for its departure, neither he nor any human being could well say. In the agony of the final struggle, there was an earnest cry for mercy, and on its lone way that spirit went, through a dark, dark cloud.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. Marston, as we have seen, had invited Henry to remain at her house, in the hope that his influence over Evart might counteract that of the gay companions with whom he was surrounded.

But Henry had few opportunities of seeing Evart. He was seldom out of bed when Henry left in the morning, and the latter was never permitted to leave the store before nine o'clock in the evening; and it would have required a very strong hold of the affections to have been able, under such circumstances, to exercise a controlling influence. To Henry, it was a great favor to have such a home free from cost; he felt it to be so, and would gladly have done anything in his power as a return for such kindness.

How well he pleased his employers he knew not. He was kept constantly busy, and no calculation seemed ever to be made as to the possibility of his being tired or having done enough.

He was generally addressed in a rough, off-hand manner, and ordered to do this or that. No one asked him any questions as to his personal concerns; as to where he lived or how he lived. The great object of the men who hired him seemed to be—to keep him busy.

At times, indeed, he thought some consideration, under the circumstances, might have been exercised; yet he never murmured, nor manifested the least backwardness to go, or to do, whatever or wherever required.

Two partners of the concern were generally behind the counter during the day, and kept a keen eye on those under them. Their favorite clerk, or the one they treated with most consideration, was a sprightly young man, who attempted to be fashionably dressed, and wore his hair very long, the ringlets having the appearance of paper formations. With a pert tongue, always eying the customers as they entered, and trying to accommodate his behavior to what he supposed to

be their standing, and accommodating his prices to what he believed to be their knowledge of the value of goods.

Henry was frequently surprised at some little matters which passed under his observation; they did not seem to be right, and yet were done with the cognizance and approval of the gentlemen principals, as witnessed in sly and expressive glances between the latter and their agent.

The great principle which Henry, in time, found to be the ruling one in the establishment was, that the salesmen should ascertain their customers' ability to judge of the relative value of articles, and suit their remarks and prices accordingly.

Messrs. Sharp & Co. had quite a run; they advertised great bargains for sale, and no doubt their customers felt satisfied that they really had purchased things at cost, or even below cost; and no doubt Messrs. Sharp & Co. felt satisfied with their success in convincing the public that they sold goods merely for the pleasure of the thing.

Being the youngest clerk, Henry had to receive and patiently bear with rebuffs and pert orders from those who had higher stations, although not his superiors in age, and far below him in general attainments. But of this he had been warned, and resolved to bear the ordeal without giving way to his feelings. His face, indeed, would flush and his eyes sparkle, but his lips were not allowed to utter any intemperate expressions. For some cause, it was evident to him that he was not a favorite, nor likely to be. But Henry was not so much disturbed on that account as many of his age would have been. He had bound himself to no particular man or set of men; so far as duty was concerned. He had thrown himself into the field of labor, resolved there to work under the eye of One "who seeth in secret," and so long as he acquitted himself manfully to that great Overseer, he was content to bear rude treatment, or reproof which he did not deserve.

In the centre of the store of Messrs. Sharp & Co., was a high desk with a small railing, which inclosed it from obtrusion; and, either seated or standing, within that inclosure through the day and most of the evening was the book-keeper of the concern.

He was a small, thick-set man of about thirty years of age, with rather a brown complexion; dark bushy hair; large eyes, dark and penetrating; heavy eyebrows, and altogether a stern

expression of countenance. He was usually dressed, when at his desk, in a faded green frock coat and black pants—the latter much the most respectable in appearance. The green coat, however, was always laid off, when he left his desk and went to his meals; he seldom left for any other purpose; and then he arrayed himself in one of London brown, well made, and of fair quality; and when thus rigged, with boots neatly polished and his hat well brushed, he made quite as much show as was at all necessary for one of his calling.

He was not given to talking, and when addressed by any of the inmates of the store on a matter of business, his answer was always in as few words as possible. Henry had never ventured to speak to him, for he had formed an opinion that the gentleman did not wish to be disturbed, and had no disposition to mingle with, or concern himself about those around him, any further than was necessary.

He could not help noticing, however, that at times the gentleman when not occupied in writing, and his pen was at rest behind his ear, he would be looking at those who were employed as salesmen—fixing his eye sometimes on them and sometimes on Messrs. Sharp & Catchem, and once or twice Henry met his keen gaze resting on himself. It was not quite agreeable, as he was somewhat sensitive on the subject of being watched.

At eight o'clock the store was generally cleared of the clerks, with the exception of Henry, who had so far learned the prices of good as to be able to serve the few lower class of purchasers who might happen in after that hour, and the book-keeper. Henry remained to lock up the store, and the other person to enjoy a little quiet time with the newspaper after his labors for the day were over.

One evening, after Henry had been waiting upon a female, who, from her appearance, was doubtless poor, who wanted a calico dress and some stockings, very much to his surprise, the gentleman who was seated by the store, and had been watching his proceedings, called out—

"Come, sit down here; I want to talk with you."

Henry was glad to sit down, but what the gentleman could have to say to him he could not imagine.

"Do you know, young man, that you have been breaking one of the rules of the store?"

"I am not conscious of having done so," said Henry, looking earnestly at the questioner.

"You aint, eh!" Well, do you ever hear Mr. Puffem, our head salesman, or Messrs. Sharp & Catchem, taking pains to point out a deficiency in any of our articles? or to pick out a real genuine article that would be cheap, for a poor woman?"

"Do they not, sir?"

"I ask *you*, did you ever hear them do such a thing? The right way, you know, is to slip off the bad articles on them that are not very likely to notice them."

"Is that right, do you think, sir?"

"Messrs. Sharp & Catchem think it right, and Mr. Puffem thinks it right, and you have got to please them, you know."

"I should wish to please them in some other way."

"It can't be done, my young friend, we—that is, Messrs. Sharp & Catchem—go for making money. Money, you know, is the great thing in this world, or in this city, no matter how you get it, if you don't break open trunks or poke your fingers into people's pockets so as to get into limbo; you mustn't do that, it aint respectable, and it won't pay. Where are you from?"

"The country."

"Why didn't you stay there?"

"Oh, there were several reasons; one was, I had no place to stay in particular."

"No parents, I suppose—no home—something of that kind; and you thought, maybe, there would be a better chance here. Where do you live now?"

"I live in Cortlandt street at present, but am going, after this, up town. I was invited by an acquaintance to stay at his house, and I have done so; but Mr. Sharp told me, a day or two since, that I must have my meals at hours more convenient for the business, and as I could not, of course, ask a family to change on my account, I have been making arrangements to board up town."

"Got money enough, I suppose?"

"My salary."

"How in the name of all that is reasonable are you going to live on that?"

"I must try to."

"When you learn how to do that, just let me know it, will you? I should like to take a lesson or two. Why, man, it takes me half of my salary of six hundred dollars to make the two ends meet. I am very much afraid you are going on the pinching plan; but, whatever else you do, don't do that—pinch everything and everybody but your own particular bread-basket. You see, as things go here, there is such a strain upon body and soul, that the only way to keep them from parting company is to have a good supply of fodder, and of the right kind. Why, man, you can't live upon slops here; you'd go off like a soap bubble."

Henry smiled, for he began to understand the manner of the gentleman, and to think his rather severe countenance did not truly represent his heart.

"But truly, my boy, how do you think to manage on one hundred dollars a year? let me hear, now."

"Why, sir, I suppose I shall have to be very prudent; you see I have engaged with a family in Oliver street; the lady does my washing."

"Be careful, be careful how you speak; we don't call washerwomen ladies—not here."

"I am to have a bedroom and my breakfast and supper for one dollar and a half a week."

"What kind of breakfast and supper?"

"Oh, I don't know; they are plain people; the man is a cartman, and the lady"——

"Does your washing. Well, go on."

"She takes in washing; they seem to be very decent people, and I am to fare as they do."

"But the dinner—that's the main chance—what is to become of that?"

"Oh, I don't care much about dinner; a cracker or two, or something of that kind, will answer."

The gentleman now threw himself back in his chair, put his hands up behind his head, and began whistling the old tune of "Molly, put the kettle on." He then turned towards Henry, and, looking rather earnestly in his face, said—

"This is a queer world, aint it?"

"A great many good things in it."

"A great many sinners in it. I mean real hard, gritty sinners, with no souls to speak of, and no feeling but for

their own pocket, and to fill that they'd squeeze a man out of his—it's no matter, though; but you see just how it is, Messrs. Sharp, Catchem & Swindle—what makes you look at me so?"

"Oh, I never heard before the name of the gentleman who is the company."

"That's very likely. The firm sounds regular enough, Sharp & Catchem, but when you come to put Swindle on the end of it, you see, it would be apt to make folks stare, you know, if they did nothing more. But Swindle is the likeliest of the bunch; he is a real man with a whole heart; but he never troubles his head about matters in the store; he supplies the needful and the other two, you see, just make the most of things. But I was going to say, here are these two men, Sharp & Catchem, they wanted a person to do just what you are now doing, they must have one, could not do without him no way. They know all about you, and that you have no means but what they give you; and they know, too, that you have not been obliged to pay board, and that you might remain where you were; and they knew when they told you that you must change your boarding-place, in what situation it would place you; and that only by half starving yourself you could manage to live at all on what they give you; and if you were to ask them to raise your salary they would show you the door in quick time."

"But I shall not ask them to raise my salary; not this year."

"You'll never see another year if you try to feed yourself on a hundred dollars! You say you are from the country—what part of the country?"

"Connecticut. I was born in Maple Cove—but have lived some years at Stratton."

"Maple Cove! why, man, I am from there myself! Who are you?—I mean, what's your name besides Henry?" And the gentleman leaned towards him, and put his hand upon his shoulder.

"Thornton—Henry Thornton."

"I know now. Your father used to live in that pretty cottage near the mill?"

"The same."

"I remember; but you see I was about your age when I

left home, and fool enough I was to leave such a place—but I wanted to do great things, so off I came and left the old folks all alone. I believe there's been a curse on me for that—not but that they had enough to live on; but I was the only chick they had, and I know they must have been lonesome—I know they must—rot it!—I hate to think of it!" And Henry noticed the waters gathering in his eye—he had warm feelings—morose as he had thought him to be.

"But that's past—it can't be helped now. Well, I got a situation, and learned business, and then the old folks you see—rot it all!"——He had to take out his handkerchief this time—his fierce looks could not save him.

"Well, when they were gone, I just mortgaged the old place—everlasting shame on me for doing it! It had lain there for a hundred years—a farm of one hundred acres—woods, water, old homestead, strong as a castle—shade trees—orchards—everything a man could want in this world—and such a view from it! Oh, it makes me heartsick to think of it! Well, no matter. There it was as I have said, and had been for a hundred years. My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—all lived there, and it had been all that time as free from debt as the old ocean is; not a man on earth could claim an inch of it, but those who worked upon it, and lived upon it, and ate its fruits and enjoyed its beautiful scenery. I mortgaged it for three thousand dollars, and with a few thousand more that the old gentleman left me, in I goes for it, neck and heels in business. Hurrah, boys! Great times. Goods sell easy—credit easy—books showed well at the end of the year—sure to be rich, no mistake; just as easy as turn your hand over! Well, I began at twenty-one, or near twenty-two; at twenty-five my balance was—but no matter what it was, it's gone to—to Jericho now! You see, every once in a while we have a turn over here; things are all brought up standing. Wind is bad, dead ashore; breakers on the lee; sails split, masts topple over; and altogether the—the old cat to pay. Well, the first brush, you see, just swept me high and dry; I was brought up with nothing but bare poles left. Got enough, however, out of the wreck to clear off all debts, but it took the whole. There I was, not a hundred dollars to save myself, and a mortgage on the old place

for three thousand dollars. 'Now,' says I, 'what's to be done?' To go back into the country and take up the hoe and the plough and pay off the debt in that way, was not to be thought of. Some said, 'Sell it and take the rest of the money and try again.' Said I, 'When I do that you may take my head and stick a handle in it to mop your store steps with; no, no.' So I thought it out. I had seen all the sights I wanted to see in the city; I had got a pretty good smattering of the ways here, and had learned some of the tricks here by which money is made, and how it might be lost. I had got a little experience, too, in the matter of devising ways and means; of getting into pinches and getting out of them, and thinks I the dance aint worth what it costs to pay the fiddler. Let me only have my old homestead once out of debt, and then they may make the money that are willing to engage in the race. And so, you see, I took to my fingers and was determined to make them help me out of the scratch. I got a book-keeper's berth, small salary at first, but fair now. Hard work, I know; but when a man can see day-light, although it may be a good ways off, yet he can hope to get out of the hole at last. I have paid off one thousand dollars, and the rest will be out of the way one of these days; when, can't say; but it shall go if my stumps can hold out, and then, 'good bye,' says I, 'to money-making.' I tell you what, my friend, when I once set my foot on that blessed old place, and feel that no one has a right there but myself, I am the happiest man that can be found in the city, look where you may."

"But I had nothing left to me, and therefore, I thought I could get along more readily here than in the country."

"That may all be; but between you and me, and this store, I advise you, come what will, don't be too eager to fall into the ways of our firm here; they ain't the end of the law as to—but no matter; and when you can get a better berth in some other sort of trade—why, if you take my advice, you'll do it; for the present necessity, though, keep quiet hold on to the bird you've got, and any time if I can be a help to you in a sly way, just let me know—you will, ha?"

"I thank you certainly very much for your kindness."

The winter had now set in, and Henry had got fairly

located as his new quarters in Oliver street. He still occasionally made a call at his friends' the Marstons, and was always well received and treated with great kindness.

Evart had changed somewhat in appearance; he dressed in the most fashionable style, and spent much of his time in promenading Broadway in company with some young men who were beginning to make themselves conspicuous in a way that, to the judgment of people in general, marked them as on the road to ruin; although friends laughed at their freaks as the mere "sowing of wild oats," which all fine bloods must do sooner or later.

One day as they were passing the store of Messrs. Sharp & Catchem, Henry noticed them pause and look up at the sign; at the same time he heard Evart say:

"Come, boys; I want to get a pair of gloves. Old Sharp's is as good as any place."

"Sharp, Catchem & Co.—what a firm!" said one of his companions. "Look out, Marston, you don't get shaved!" and then in rather a boisterous manner, and laughing loudly, they entered. Henry was alarmed, and moved as quickly as he could towards the back part of the store, while Mr. Puffem stood quietly awaiting the gentleman's orders.

"Let's see your gloves—your best Woodstock."

Mr. Puffem, as well as his principals, had heard some of the remarks and noticed the manners of the young men, and not therefore, being in the very best humor, moved rather slowly, and laid the box down on the counter in a very cavalier manner. Evart looked at him sternly.

"Are these all you've got?"

"Not exactly."

"Let's see more of them."

"Won't they answer?"

"That's my own business; I want a choice."

Mr. Puffem colored deeply, but made no reply, merely with the same leisurely movement, drew forth another box, and laying it down, called a younger clerk to wait upon the gentleman, while he, with his back turned towards the counter, began arranging some articles on the shelves.

One of the young men then said to Evart, in a tone not very loud, but sufficiently so to reach the ear of him for whom they were designed:

"That counter-jumper is too proud for his business; let us go somewhere else."

"You are welcome to do that, sir; we did not ask you in."

"We want none of your impertinence, sir; we were not speaking to you!"

This was not said by Evart, who just then saw Henry, and stepping up, shook hands with him across the counter, and leaning over upon it began to chat pleasantly, and in a few moments asked him to come that way and pick him out a pair of gloves. Henry would have declined, for he never ventured to wait upon customers, without the duty was assigned him by those whose department it properly was, but he stepped up to Mr. Puffem, and asked in his pleasant manner,

"Shall I wait upon Mr. Marston?"

"You go back to your place and fold up these goods; when I want you I'll call you."

"Come, Marston, I can't stand that;" and taking his arm, "come, there are more gloves to be found elsewhere." Evart releasing his arm from his companion, turned a fierce look at the angry clerk.

"I shall pay you for your insolence, sir, at some other time."

What answer Mr. Puffem made, Henry did not hear; he was much alarmed though, for he saw that Messrs. Sharp & Catchem were both looking very cross, and Mr. Belden, the book-keeper, had turned upon his seat, and put his pen behind his ear, and was staring wildly first at him, and then at the rest of the concern.

That Henry was not to blame there could have been no doubt in the mind of any one who witnessed his conduct; but Mr. Sharp had missed the sale of a pair of gloves, and, although he cared not particularly for the treatment Mr. Puffem had received, yet he must seem to resent it, and began at once to talk loudly, and to say a great deal about dandies and low-bred people, and finally he stepped up to Henry—

"You seem to be acquainted with those young men?"

"I am particularly acquainted, sir, with one of them—the others I have been merely introduced to."

"Well, my young man, I can tell you, the sooner you drop such acquaintance the better; if you don't you will be dropped off from my list of clerks in short order, and the next

time people call you to wait upon them, don't you stir until you are bidden—do you hear?"

"Certainly, sir—I am very sorry to have given offence—I did not design to do wrong."

This pleasant answer took Mr. Sharp by surprise. It gave him no chance to say anything further, which, from the aspect of his countenance at the time, it was evident he intended to do. It was unfortunate for Henry though, that Mr. Puffem's feelings had been wounded, and from that time, whenever an opportunity was afforded that young getleman, to put a harder task upon Henry, or to make him feel his dependence, he was sure to take advantage of it, and for reasons which will soon be evident, it was much against Henry's interest that he had been connected in the minds of these gentlemen with this rude behavior of the young men.

It was not long after the occurrence above mentioned, as Henry was going along on his lonely way up town, after having closed the store and parted with his friend Belden, when just opposite the old Mead Gardens, near the Hospital, he came suddenly upon some young men who seemed to be in some difficulty, for there was loud talking, and people were stopping to see what was the matter, and, as was very natural, he stopped too.

When, to his utter dismay, he perceived Evart and Mr. Puffem standing face to face, evidently in a hostile attitude, and each party with companions who seemed by no means disposed to allay matters, for they too were throwing out harsh expressions mingled with oaths. It was very clear to Henry that mischief was at hand, and to his chagrin and sorrow he saw signs of unnatural excitement in his friend Evart, such as he had never noticed before. He was, without doubt, under the influence of liquor, and could hardly maintain a steady position.

Not pausing to think of consequences to himself, he yielded at once to the impulse of friendship, pressed through to the side of Evart, and taking his arm endeavored to lead him off.

"No, no, my boy! I want to give that young counter-jumper a lesson; I want to teach him how to behave himself—the low-lived fellow!"

With that the wrath of Mr. Puffem, having been already

sufficiently excited, went boiling over, and he rushed furiously at young Marston, aiming a blow directly at his face.

Henry was possessed of great muscular strength for one of his age, and when excited would, no doubt, have been a match for one much older than himself. He was now, however, only anxious to protect his friend—no passion nerved his arm—his only thought was for Evart's safety; by a quick movement he turned aside the blow, and Mr. Puffem, impelled by his own impetus, went reeling amid the crowd, and brought up on his hands and knees. A loud laugh and a huzza from the bystanders were not calculated to appease the feelings of Mr. Puffem, and soon recovering an erect position, came on again like a madman, and was making directly for Henry. Some gentlemen, however, who had been witnesses of the scene, and admiring Henry's conduct in trying to get his friend away from the crowd, immediately interposed, threatening all parties with a call for the watch if they did not immediately disperse. Mr. Puffem, however, was with difficulty kept at bay; his wrath seemed to have turned entirely upon Henry.

"I want to give that young scoundrel what he deserves."

"I think," said one of the gentlemen, "you have no one to blame but yourself, so far as that young man is concerned. I am sorry that the friend he is protecting is not in a better condition to take care of himself."

Evart was anxious to return to the encounter, but Henry's entreaties to the young men who were with his friend to aid in getting him away, prevailed, and Evart was hurried out of the tumult, while Mr. Puffem remained to tell his own story, and what he would have done if only let alone.

"But that chap shall smart for this night's work, I'll warrant him that."

Henry heard this remark, but whether intended for himself or Evart, he did not know, nor did he, at the time, think much about it, his whole mind being absorbed in his interest for the latter, and with thinking how he should get him home and to his room without his mother's knowledge of his condition.

The young men left them at the corner of Cortlandt street, and Henry and Evart walked in silence down that street until they reached the house, when Evart spoke—

"You will stay with me to-night, Henry?"

"Certainly, if you wish me to."

"I do; I want to talk with you. I have not seen you for a long time, and I have something to say to you. Plague on it. I wish, Henry"——

But what he was going to say was interrupted by the servant opening the door. A glance from the latter to Evart, and a wink to Henry, assured him that the condition of his friend was noticed. Henry watched a chance to whisper to the man.

"Is Mrs. Marston up?"

"She is gone to bed."

"You will say nothing about this to her?"

"Not I. It would break her heart."

Before Evart retired to rest, the effect of the excitement he had been under began to wear off; and, as usual, a corresponding reaction began to take place. For a while he sat with his head resting on his hands, and Henry thought he saw him occasionally wipe away a tear; but he spoke not to him, as he wished to let his feelings do their own work. His conscience, he believed, was awakening, and that powerful monitor, when thoroughly aroused, could do more than the tongue of the dearest friend.

The night was passing on, but Henry felt no inclination for retiring. He too had subjects for thought on his own account not very agreeable. He had indeed done nothing that he felt was wrong; but he had learned some lessons in life which taught him that it was not always necessary to be in the wrong in order to bring upon one's head the displeasure of others.

That Mr. Puffem was highly incensed, he knew; and that his representation of the affair would bring upon him the displeasure of his employers, he also believed; but concluded that it could not result in a serious difficulty. He would no doubt be reproved, and might suffer many annoyances from Mr. Puffem; but he resolved to bear them patiently.

"Henry," said Evart, raising his head and looking towards him, "come, sit by me."

As Henry approached he could see distinctly that Evart had been weeping, and that his countenance bore the marks of a mind sorely distressed.

"I want you to tell me what I shall do, for I am very unhappy. I do not wish you to excuse me or apologize for me even to myself. But what *shall* I do?"

"Do you mean, Evart, in reference to your mother?"

"My mother! No, I had not thought of her. I do hope she may not hear of it. Oh, it will almost break her heart! I must see Joe, and entreat him to say nothing."

"I have already spoken to him, and he has promised to do so."

"You are very considerate—very kind indeed! But I wonder, Henry, you have not left me; I do not deserve your friendship."

"Do not talk so, Evart. Do you think I would desert such a friend as you under any circumstances?"

"No, I am sure you would not. I have proof enough of that. But what shall I do, Henry? I am most miserable!"

"There is no way I know of, Evart, but when we have done wrong and are conscious of it, to repent and ask forgiveness of God; and ask him to help us avoid the evil, and do that which is right."

Evart made no reply. He looked at Henry as though much astonished. The idea presented was something new—unthought of before. It sounded strangely to his ears. Alas, poor youth! His mother, kind and indulgent as she was, and with her heart full of love to him, had never taught him that there was a higher Power to whom his actions had reference, and to whom he was accountable. She had never taken him in childhood and taught him to kneel beside her, and lay his head upon her lap, and say, "Our Father who art in heaven." She had not prayed herself; she had lived without God! He had not been in all her thoughts. His name was never mentioned to this dear son as one to whom he owed allegiance, even beyond that which was due to her. He had been trained by her—who should have been his guiding angel to lead him on to God and heaven—as a mere creature of this world! His highest duty to be kind to her, and his only aim to taste the pleasures which this world affords! She would indeed have had him put restraints upon his passions, and avoid debasing company and low pursuits. But otherwise, to sip all sweets which sense affords, and roll in every luxury that wealth could purchase! This

was her wish concerning him, and for this she had trained him, and for naught else.

At times, indeed, she spoke of some employment that might perhaps be useful during his minority, whereby he would be kept from such companions as might lead him into improprieties; but even this desire had been but feebly expressed. To make his mark in life by his own manly efforts; to fulfill the great design of his creation; to expand his views beyond his own selfish ends; to make him feel that man was his brother; and that, in this world, where sorrow and misfortune are so rife, it must be his part to mete out of his abundance to the needy, to bind up the broken heart, to give a helping hand to those who were struggling in the deep waters, and thus to make his track through life lovely and refreshing. All this she had not thought of, for this her teachings had not aimed.

No wonder, then, if the reply of Henry filled him with amazement. He was indeed unhappy; but his only idea was how to get relief from the discomfort and shame of which he was conscious.

That he had sinned against his Maker; that he must ask forgiveness of One whom he had never in his life addressed, and whose name, at times, he had carelessly used; or to go to Him for help—was indeed a new idea. And yet the serious manner of Henry, and the assurance he felt of his friendship, caused him to reflect on what he had said; for some moments he was silent, and then replied—

"That would be new business for me, Henry; oh, you do not know how hard it would be for me to do that."

"We must all come to it though, Evart, if we would be happy."

"It is easy, no doubt, for you, Henry, because you are so good."

"Oh, stop, Evart; do not talk so; you do not know me; I am not good—far from it—I wish I was."

"Well, you are always trying to do right, I am sure of that."

"We ought all of us to do that; but we need a great deal of help to enable us to do it; and no one can help us like our Father in heaven."

Evart looked at his friend with intense interest—

"Oh, Henry, I would give anything to have the feeling which you seem to have when you speak of God. Does he seem to you really as your father!"

Henry was much affected; he saw the tear moistening the eye of his companion; he knew that he was feeling deeply. Oh, how he wished to be able to unfold to him the blessedness of such a relation to the Supreme Being as the title of Father indicated. But he had never before conversed upon such a subject—all he could do was to relate his own experience.

"You cannot understand, Evart, what it is to be left alone, entirely alone in the wide world—no one to look to for support; no one to receive you; no one to tell you what to do, or how to do, or where to go; and no means of your own; nothing but your own head, and hands, and feet. The morning when you and I first met in that cedar grove I had been feeling very sad. You see that spot of ground was once my father's. I had been there many times with him when a little boy, often of a morning or evening—you know the prospect is fine from it."

"Yes, it is the most beautiful view I ever beheld."

"I had no idea how I should feel when I got there; but it brought back to me all my past life, and I cannot tell how terribly dark and hopeless I felt. I sat down and thought awhile, and then the tears came, I could not help it. After a good spell of weeping I took out of my pocket a leaf from the Bible, one that I had torn from an old book in order to have it handy, to learn a certain chapter which my mother had requested me to commit to memory."

"Then *your* mother taught you to read the Bible?"

"Oh, yes, she wished to have me read it and learn it too; and I know she loved it herself. Well, as I began to read that leaf, although I had read it many times before, it seemed all new to me; it seemed as if God was speaking to me and asking me to trust in him; and oh, I cannot tell you how I felt. 'If God would be my father, and guide me and take care of me, I should not be alone; I need not be afraid.' And then, Evart, I determined that I would trust in him; I gave myself up into his hands, and I solemnly promised, with his help, to do whatever the Bible told me was right, and I mean to stick to it."

"Henry, will you lend me that leaf to-night? you shall have it again."

"With all my heart. I am in no hurry for it, as I have a Bible in my room, only I should like to have it again; I wish to keep it for particular reasons."

And then they parted for the night, and, as it proved, for quite a period of time.

As Mr. Puffem did not get to the store until just before the arrival of the principals, Henry was saved the necessity of any private communications from him, and soon after their entrance he was sent off upon some errands. During the more busy parts of the day all hands were employed, and as Henry perceived no change in the bearing of the head clerk towards himself, he began to indulge the hope that everything would pass off without any difficulty.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, he had just come in from a long walk in delivering sundry small parcels of goods, when Mr. Sharp came up to him and asked him to walk to the desk; Henry complied with his request immediately.

"Mr. Belden, how much is due to this young gentleman?"

Mr. Belden at once turned over his books, and, in a moment more, handed a slip of paper to Mr. Sharp.

"Just come this way, will you;" and Henry followed him to the drawer of the counter, from this Mr. Sharp abstracted a small sum of money, and, laying it down, asked Henry to count it, looking at him very sternly at the same time.

"There are just seven dollars, sir."

"Seven dollars, that is the balance due you, here is the paper; and here is an account left this morning, I presume it is for you—it is your name at least."

Henry looked at it, and no doubt looked very pale, for he felt as if all his strength had departed from him; and Mr. Sharp doubtless noticed the effect it produced, for he looked at Mr. Puffem, and something very like a smile played upon the lips of the latter gentleman. It was a bill from the clothing establishment of Messrs. W. & Co., in Maiden lane, for thirty-three dollars, the price of a suit of clothes purchased some months since.

"That bill is for you, is it not?"

"I expect it is, sir, but"——

"No matter about any explanations, we have nothing to do with it; only if you were going to remain here I should say to you that we don't like to have our clerks running up bills at tailors or anywhere else; but all I have to say is, that we do not need your services any longer; you have your pay and are at liberty to take your hat as soon as you please."

Too indignant to ask a reason for such treatment, he at once took his hat, and, without saying a word, walked from the store. As he was passing through the door several ladies were entering; his eye glanced at one of them much younger than the rest; she had not seen him; he would have rushed back and spoken to her, but no, nothing should induce him to cross that threshold.

A moment he paused on the sidewalk, again distinctly he saw those features; he could not be mistaken; they were engraven upon his heart; they had been present with him in all his waking moments, and busy with his dreams at night; no, he could not be mistaken—it was Louise Lovelace.

## CHAPTER XIV.

When Evart Marston retired to rest that night, after reading over carefully the little stray leaf which Henry had loaned him, a variety of feelings began to affect his mind. That there was something in these words which carried conviction to the heart of their truth and wisdom, he readily acknowledged; and if he should give himself up to the observance of them, he verily believed he would be happier than he had ever been. He did not wonder that, under Henry's circumstances, they had taken such a strong hold of his heart; nor did he wonder that Henry seemed so cheerful and contented, even straitened as he was, and obliged to labor so constantly. "But Henry had no such difficulties to encounter as he, Evart, would have, should he resolve to give his whole heart to walk in the way thus pointed out. He had wealth, or would soon have it; he must live in a certain style—it would be expected of him. All his family and acquaintances paid but small regard to such things; must he be singular? Must he break off from them, and give himself up to religion, and deny himself all that was agreeable in life, and walk in a gloomy atmosphere the rest of his days? How could he renounce all his companions, and make no new ones? Indeed, his case was very different from that of Henry." Thus did he reason; and no wonder, for he had only thought of religion as allied to fanaticism, or poverty and gloom! And then an opposite view was presented to his mind: "Henry was not sad, nor morose, nor fanatical; he was ever cheerful, full of hope; light seemed always to be around him; he was ready for all reasonable enjoyment of the world. To Henry the outer world had a beauty which he, Evart, could not see: he was certainly the happier of the two."

And again: "What would be the consequence, should he keep on in his present course—go with his present companions on the road they had been walking—whither would it lead? To ruin! Yes, the ruin of his best affections, the

destruction of his domestic peace, the anguish of his mother, and a premature grave!"

And thus the conflict went on until he fell asleep, and did not awake until his servant called him, informing him at the same time that young Mr. Lovel and Mr. Foster wished to see him.

"Tell them to wait, Joe; I will be down soon."

The reflections of the past night had not, indeed, led him to the true source of help for wisdom and strength; but a salutary impression had been made upon his mind. Some things he had resolved upon, which he determined at once to carry out, and his desire to see these young companions now, was for a very different purpose than any he had hitherto indulged.

They were his associates of the last evening. Tom Lovell and Joe Foster, as they were usually called, were the sons of rich parents; their fathers were both living, and both as busily engaged as they had ever been in making the most of their large estates. Tom was now nineteen years of age; he was in college, and in some way stumbling along through his course; not fond of study, and without ambition to excel as a scholar, he paid no more attention to his books than was absolutely necessary, and would no doubt have been left behind by his class, except for the fact of his father's wealth—college professors are sometimes strangely oblivious to the delinqencies of their students. What Tom would make, his father never seemed to take into consideration; *he* was laying up an abundant store for Tom, so that it would be unnecessary that his son should do much for himself; he would be rich, and that, in Mr. Lovell's view, was the "summum bonum!" At present, Tom was a lively young man, fond of company, ready to drink his glass after dinner, to take his hand at the card-table; and if he was out sometimes rather late at night, or came home in higher spirits than was quite natural, it was not thought much of. His father did indeed, at times, say to him,

"Tom, you must be careful;" but nothing further.

Joe Foster was not only the son of a wealthy father, but was heir to a large estate left him by an uncle; so that he was placed in a condition quite independent of what his father might leave him.

Mr. Foster at times appeared to consider this circumstance as unfortunate for his son; and yet he was quite well pleased

to point out to his friends the elegant span that Joe had been purchasing, and even to be driven by him down to his store in Burling Slip, or into Wall street at "change hours."

That Joe should learn any business, or confine himself to hard study, he did not think necessary. "Joe was not in the best health; he had grown fast, was pale, rather slender in his make; his health was the great thing." And Mr. Foster sometimes made remarks which his son could hear, such as—"Young men in Joe's situation mustn't be curbed too tight," or, "Young folks must enjoy themselves; if they don't take pleasure when they're young, they never will." However excellent the doctrines might have been, the effect of them, under the circumstances, was to make Joe feel that he was "all correct." He was twenty, and would soon be master of his own fortune.

That both these young men had gone further in what they were pleased to call "mere wild freaks," than their parents were aware, there was no doubt. Many knew it; some of the police knew it, and snugly pocketed their hush-money. And Evart knew it, although he had not gone with them as yet, to all the scenes of riot and evil which were open to them. He was their confident; they told him everything, "glorying in their shame," and perhaps without design were instilling into his young heart drops of poison, which by degrees would make callous the tender sensibilities, and steal away the pure affections, and turn the whole natural tide of his being into a turbid, polluted, and offensive stream.

They had wound themselves around Evart's heart by just such fascinating ties as youth readily yields to. They were fond of him; of naturally kind dispositions, neither mean nor jealous, nor easily irritated.

The boys had grown up together; played with each other in childhood, and had been almost inseparable companions even to that hour. A little older than Evart, he had learned to look up to them, and without doubt, under such guides, he was in a fair way to make a wreck of property, health, and character.

If Evart had any suspicion of danger until the events of the last evening, there had been nothing in his conduct that manifested it. Pleasure, doubtless, had been the one object of his desire and aim, and he had followed her call without a

question; nor was he conscious how far he had already advanced on the dangerous ground, until he hears a voice saying to him "*beware*—that path leads down to hell. Shame shall be the promotion of fools."

The young men had to wait some time, and were beginning to be impatient, so that when Evart entered, Joe Foster, although in a friendly way, began to rally him upon his delay.

"Halloa, my good fellow! you have kept us waiting so long, I didn't know but you thought it was some fellow come a dunning!"

"Please excuse me; I fear I have kept you too long, but mother would make me take a cup of coffee."

"All right, all right," said Tom Lovell, who advanced to give him his hand; "you know our business is not in general very pressing, there is nobody waiting for *us;* and so we need not hurry others. How do you feel this morning?"

"Only so so."

"Why, I feel like a lark," said Joe Foster. "You see, Marston, you are only breaking in; a little worried with the first drive; you'll get over that, my boy, by and by; but where is Thornton?"

"I presume," said Evart, "he has had his breakfast and off long ago. He is all for business, you know."

"He is a fine fellow, that," said Lovell; "how he flew like lightning before you, Evart, and sent that scamp reeling among the crowd."

"Yes, if that blow had struck where he meant it should, my boy, he would have marred your pretty face sadly; it was a lucky thought in Thornton. I should have given it to him though, if he had struck you; the low counter jumper!"

"Oh, well Joe, I expect I deserved to have been punished; although I feel grateful to Henry for his interference; I did not act like a gentleman, I expect; and I am heartily sorry for the whole scrape. It was not much to our credit."

"Halloa, Evart! what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, Joe; only when we are in the wrong it is as well to say it, especially if we are conscious of it."

"No wrong about it; he was impudent to you, and you gave him as good as he sent. No wrong about that, as I take it."

"Oh, well, perhaps if I had avoided doing wrong in the first place; that is, if I had acted a more gentlemanly part in his store it would have prevented any difficulty."

"Gentlemanly part! It is well enough, Evart, when you are dealing with gentlemen to act the gentleman yourself; but with such low scamps, the only way is to let them see that you know what their value is."

"Well, Joe, you must do as you think best; but I am well satisfied that proper deportment on my part, would have saved some trouble; at least, it would have saved me a great many unpleasant feelings."

"Oh, pshaw! Evart! It's all fudge. I know what ails you this morning; you was a little high last night, as well as the rest of us. That champagne was a little too much for you, and as I said, you are just breaking in; you feel a little down this morning—a little blue like; a glass of bitters will set all right. Come, let's go to the 'Stone Jug;' I feel the want of a little something myself. What do you say, Tom?"

"Just as you please."

"Come, Evart."

"Oh, no, thank you; I had rather not; and I tell you what it is, boys, I think we ought to be careful."

"Ha, ha, ha! well done Evart! If that ain't what the old man says to me, sometimes: 'Tom you must be careful.' What has come over Evart, Joe?"

"Oh, nothing; but he feels, as I said, a little blue. A glass of bitters, I know, will cure him; but if he says No, I am not the chap to urge him. Every tub must stand on its own bottom. But come, Evart, if you don't want any bitters, why, let it alone then. Let's go take a stroll somewhere."

Evart did not wish to go, but as he had made up his mind to have a free talk with his companions, and as the result of it might be a severing of their friendly relations, he did not think it proper that it should take place in his own house; he therefore accepted the invitation to take a stroll. Knowing pretty well in what direction it would lead, and hoping thereby to gain the opportunity he desired. Never before had the views and feelings of his friends appeared to him as they now did. He could scarcely believe that he had been heart and hand with them; and he shuddered to think how

near the edge of a yawning gulf he had been standing. What course he should pursue he could not then say; but he must fly from a danger to which his eyes had been opened.

After his companions had satisfied themselves at the bar, one of them proposed that they should go into the billiard saloon and have a game.

"I want you first to go with me into a room where we can have a little private talk."

They looked significantly at each other, but assented to his proposition. And soon they were all again seated together.

"Now, I suppose, boys, you will think it a little strange that I should turn so short a corner, and begin without any previous notice, to denounce what I have hitherto assented to, as all right and proper. Yet, so it is. I feel that we three—I say nothing of the rest of the fellows, we have been most together—always together; we have never had any difficulty with each other, but I am satisfied we are not doing one another any good. We are neither helping each other to be any wiser or better. I am in earnest, Joe."

"I believe you are, Evart, and that makes me laugh. Excuse me, I'll try to hold in."

Evart did not join in the laugh which both his companions indulged, but waited patiently until they had satisfied their mirth.

"Go on now, Evart. Tom and I have had our laugh out; we will be sober as deacons."

"I say we not only are doing each other no good, but we are encouraging one another in a course that must end in the ruin of our character, our property, and our health. How long since was it that you and I followed Tom Blauvelt to the grave? You know as well as I do what brought him there; and in what condition did we see Bill Kenzer but yesterday! the laughing-stock of the off-scouring of the city. And we can well remember when he stood full as fair as we do now. He is now bankrupt in property, the torment of his mother, and a terror to all the family!

"These are cases right among us of those with whom our families are intimate; and how long will it be if, young as we now are, we give full rein to our passions, before we too shall be the scoff and by-word of the city! But that is not the worst of it."

"What! not got to the worst yet, Evart? You ain't a going to preach a sermon, I hope, from the text you have given out."

Evart felt the flush burning his cheek; he understood now as never before, that ties of friendship formed in the commission of evil, are but slender indeed. These two young men whom he had regarded almost as brothers, were ready now, because he took a manly stand and held up to their view the dangers to which they and he were mutually exposed, to treat him with ridicule and contempt.

It was in his mind to have pointed them to the vengeance of an angry God. He had been thinking of it himself, and it had taken a strong hold of his feelings; but his judgment told him, "*that* was a subject with which he was himself as yet too little acquainted, and whatever effect it might eventually have upon his own heart and conduct, there was no prospect that it would meet with aught else than ridicule from those he was addressing; he would not, therefore, venture upon such an argument." He was conscious, however, that he did not deserve their continued sneer.

"You may not value my friendship, either of you, and yet we have been too long intimate as friends for me to retaliate and violently sunder the ties which bind us. I have not laid any charge against either of you that I do not bring against myself, but I have spoken from the fullness of my heart. I *am resolved to change my course of life*, and for your own sakes, as well as mine, I entreat you not to trifle with the subject, because I am a little younger than you are, not to despise my warning."

Tom Lovell was evidently touched with this last address of Evart. He had reasons too for not wishing to break with Evart. He had been on very intimate terms with the family, and had become somewhat interested in Evart's sister. Tom was her partner generally in the social dance, and on more public occasions, and was ever ready to wait upon her when an opportunity offered. He was of fine personal appearance, and had an easy disposition, perhaps too easy for his own good, and could make himself quite agreeable when so disposed. Nothing perhaps had been thought of his little attentions by Mrs. Marston or Evart, nor may Tom himself have considered the subject seriously; and yet, when there

was a probability of any obstruction being thrown in the way of his frequent visits there, by a severing of friendly relations with his companion, it is quite possible he felt a reluctance on that account to proceed to extremities.

Joe Foster, however, had no such tie to his young friend. The society of ladies he never fancied, and that wholesome restraint upon a young man of property, with every opportunity to indulge his own will, was wanting. Joe, likewise, as has been said, was the elder of the three; perhaps on that account he could not bear the idea of yielding; he was the first to speak.

"I may understand then, Marston, that you wish to cut us?"——The oath he swore too was terrible to be repeated. "I am not the man to blubber over an old friend who tells me he don't want my company any longer, and I am not to be crowed into what you call a right way, by so young a chick of the roost as you are; you have no doubt taken your lesson from that young scapegrace from New England, and I suppose he has 'lifted up his warning voice against us,' and tried to persuade you that we are a set of reprobates, who will probably lead you to the gallows, or somewhere else, and you have been fool enough to listen to him. But you can tell him for me, that Joe Foster would not take one step out of that track which seems to him best, for all the puling saints between here and Nova Scotia—no not I!"

"Joe Foster, I have but one word more to say, and that is, 'You utterly misunderstand the character of Henry Thornton. He is poor, and is working to support himself, but he is a gentleman in heart and conduct; he is a noble, spirited, upright, manly fellow—above all that is little or mean. Never has he opened his lips to me in dispraise of any friend of mine, and I only wish that you and I were in as fair a way to make true men of ourselves as he is!"

Joe now broke out into a violent abuse, not of any one in particular, but of all who pretended to anything like "extraordinary goodness," denouncing them as a pack of liars and hypocrites, and all that was mean and contemptible. Evart made no reply, but Tom Lovell took Joe by the arm and tried to pacify him—he hoped to get matters all righted again

"Come, Joe, where's the use of all this palaver. Hush up man; you and I and Evart will be good friends yet. Why,

can't a fellow express his mind? but you make such a bluster about it! Come, let us go all of us, and have a game of billiards; no harm in that, is there, Evart? No harm in knocking about a few balls about over a long table! Come —I say, Joe—stop your noise, and hear to reason—come, let us shake hands—Evart give us your hand."

"With all my heart, Tom."

Joe Foster, too, held out his hand, and as Evart grasped it he said,

"Each tub on its own bottom, Evart; mind that."

"You need not fear, Joe, that I shall presume to give you advice after this. I have only done what my feelings as a friend have dictated. Hereafter you will find me ever ready to do you a good turn if you should request it, as ready as ever, and if I cannot unite with you in such pursuits as I think dangerous, it will not be that I think less of you, or myself to be better than you, but because my judgment tells me, it is time to take a stand against them."

"Enough said, Evart—enough said—our roads do not run together as they have; I see that; but it can't be helped, so good bye."

And thus they parted! Whether his two companions went to the game which had been proposed, he knew not; as he passed through the bar-room he heard Joe say "Come, Tom, let's have a glass of London particular, first." Evart tarried not, for he wished to get to his home, he had much to think of, and he must be alone.

## CHAPTER XV.

Of all the dark spots in Henry's short life to which he could now look back, not one appeared so shrouded in gloom as the present.

His heart drooped sadly as he walked towards his resting-place for the night—home he could not call it—although he had been treated with much kindness there, yet he was well aware that in a city where every article of food must be paid for, and the shelter, however poor, or small, must be procured at much cost, he could only expect to remain so long as he could pay the small charge which was made for his weekly board. Almost immediately after supper, he retired to his little attic room; he must collect his thoughts, and prepare for what was before him.

He had not only lost his situation and means of support, but he had lost it under circumstances that would operate most powerfully against his attempts to procure another—for how could he refer to those who had just dismissed him, for testimonials of character. Messrs. Sharp & Co. were, no doubt, displeased with him. What had been told them by their head salesman, he knew not; but, doubtless, he had made representations of the affair which placed him in a very unfavorable position. To them, therefore, he could not refer. And the gentlemen who had procured that situation for him, knew nothing but at second-hand; their opinion, indeed, was favorable; but he had been upon probation, and found wanting, and what could they now say?

That he had not done wrong he felt conscious, and that he had faithfully served his employers to the extent of his abilities; but, in an hour of such extremity, it requires strong faith to derive effectual consolation from such a source.

Tired, at length, of looking in a direction where no light was to be seen, he turned to another point in his situation not much more satisfactory, and that was the condition of his finances. He had on hand, besides what Mr. Sharp had paid him, twelve dollars—in all, nineteen dollars. Evart, indeed,

was still indebted for the twenty dollars he had borrowed; but no doubt Evart had forgotten it. After all the kindness he had received at his house, he could not think of asking for it.

The most unpleasant circumstance of all was the unsettled account from Messrs. W. & Co., which Mr. Sharp had handed to him. He had supposed the suit of clothes were a present from Evart; and yet it had been his purpose, so soon as he was able, to refund the cost. "He did not wish them as a gift, but how could he now discharge the debt?" One conclusion, however, he soon came to, and that was to be open and above-board in all such matters. "The debt had been contracted in opposition to his will, and had he been aware of all the circumstances, he would most firmly have resisted the purchase; but as it was now done; he would go at once to Messrs. W. & Co., and tell them, as far as he could, how it had happened and how he was situated, and pay them what he had, reserving, with their consent, a few dollars to enable him to sustain himself for a week or so." Work, of some sort, he believed he should be able to find, even if it was that of the most menial kind.

How soon will the mind rise above the gloom which circumstances may have thrown around it, when supported by a consciousness of doing right. Henry's heart did not upbraid him: "he might have erred in judgment, but he hoped to grow wiser by every new experience." He still retained his confidence in Evart; he believed in his friendship never more firmly than at that moment; and he felt assured that the trial he was now suffering on Evart's account, had only resulted from a want of thought: "Always blessed with abundance himself, he could not realize what inconvenience he, Henry, might suffer for the want of that which he had loaned him."

He had some faint hope, too, "that Evart had come to a better mind; that he meant to change his course of life." Ah! had he then known that the few words he had spoken to his friend had taken a deep hold upon his heart; that the steadfast, correct, and pure course which he had maintained, was then doing its silent but sure work; and that the little leaf which, like a talisman, had charmed his own heart to rest, and led him to seek for guidance to a sure and everlasting Friend, was also operating upon the mind of Evart,

and waking up resolves, that if carried out would bear him away from the dangers to which he was exposed, to a safe and sure path! Could he at that moment have seen that friend whom he had so nobly tried to save from ruin, sitting in silence with that little heavenly messenger in his hand, pondering, with intense interest, its rich and clear instructions! How his heart would have leaped for joy, and every shadow on his path been dissipated!

And now, too, he has some thoughts which disconnect him with present scenes, and lead him into the past. "He was confident that he had seen that very day, and but a few hours since, her whose image was ever present with him, like another self! Why was she here? and where? And would it answer for him, even if he should discover the place of her abode, to call upon her? and would she wish to see him? Might not her circumstances, by possibility, have changed? She was, no doubt, the same kind, confiding Louise, but"—— It were vain to follow him through all the maze in which his thoughts were wandering. A tap upon the door has aroused him from his reverie, and with haste he opens it.

"A gentleman has called to see you; he is in the best room below."

And Henry, without reply, goes at once below, and, to his utter surprise, was accosted as he entered the room by Mr. Belden.

"How are you—how are you? Thought I would just run up this evening and see you a moment. How do you feel?"

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Belden; I thank you very much for calling, it is so good to see a friend!"

"That's what I thought. Hard world, aint it?—plaguy hard—full of tough, grinding sinners, without any bowels and mercies!"

"There are a great many kind people, though, for all."

"Some—some few, here and there—mighty scarce. But how do you feel? Ain't down-hearted, I hope. Keep up your pluck: when that's gone a man's done for; he'll go down stream, belly up, like a dead fish! The world aint to an end yet, and there's more places besides the very respectable establishment of Messrs. Sharp, Catchem & Co."

"Yes, sir, no doubt; but the difficulty with me will be as to a reference; those to whom I may apply will wish to know

where I last lived, and why I left; and should they go to Mr. Sharp, I know not what he would say to them."

"I know, I know. It looks blue. I don't see clear how you'll manage it; but may be there'll be some way—I always found there was *some* way; it wasn't always the way I was trying to find, but a kind of cross-road. You'll come across something or somebody, only keep up your pluck. How is it about means? short, aint you?"

"Oh, thank you, sir; I shall have enough to last me a week or two."

"That all! And I suppose you mean it will carry you a week or so on the pinching plan? It will never do, my young fellow; your head will be pinched enough, contriving ways and means to get a living in this scrambling, tearing, grinding world, without pinching anywhere else. As I have told you before, good fodder—and plenty of it—can't be dispensed with, nohow, and make a live of it. Here now"——

And Mr. Belden, in his quick way, had his pocket-book out, and had opened it and taken out some bills, before Henry was aware of his design.

"Oh, no, Mr. Belden; you are very good; I thank you, most heartily, but I cannot take it. I have money."

"It's only a loan!"

"Oh, sir, I thank you; I feel your kindness more than I can tell you; but indeed I can do without—indeed I can."

"Without pinching? I am afraid you can't now! You see, I don't go it large myself; small salary; interest and mortgage, and all that, you know, to pay, as I have told you; but I always keep a little on hand, in case of a storm, or a blow-up, or something of the kind: a fellow never knows what's coming, especially among some folks. You see, I aint the best-natured that ever was! Sometimes everthing looks cross-grained—kind of muggy, mussy, dirty! I feel sharp, snappish; and when they poke me too hard in the ribs at such times, you see, I kick; can't stand it nohow; if the world comes to an end, can't help it; won't be poked. I'll do my work right and tight; they shan't have no fault to find about that; I can show as neat work and as correct work as the best in the city, I don't care where they are. But if they poke too hard, I kick—can't help it. You'd better take a little, though; you'll feel more whole-hearted; there's nothing like a lean purse to give a man the heart-beat, and

make him feel all gone, like. At any rate, you'll promise me, if things begin to tighten up, you'll let me know; you will now, won't you?"

"I will, Mr. Belden, certainly, if it should come to that—but whether I do so or not, I shall never forget your kindness. I am sure I have never done anything for you to merit it."

"That's nothing to do with the matter at all, my dear fellow. You see, I don't like disturbances. I've had enough of them in my day. I like to be quiet—and have my mind at rest."

I couldn't, you see, go home and take my supper. I like a good hearty supper, a man sleeps the better for it—*I* do; and then go to bed, and be a thinking of you all alone and—rot it all."

Mr. Belden got somewhat confused in his ideas, or something else just then ailed him, for he had to pause and cough several times, and was very restless in his chair; at length he sprang up quickly.

"Well, I must go; mind—you remember—don't give in, brace up, and when the worst comes to the worst, just throw a line into the office, addressed to Joe Belden. Now you hear! I aint much, but you know it's good to have some one to call on, if it is only to let out the grievance. Trouble all kept in, is like wind on the stomach, it's colicky—very—good-bye."

Henry could only grasp in silence, the hand of the kind-hearted man; but Mr. Belden seemed perfectly satisfied with his silent adieu. Perhaps he saw tokens which told him without words, that his visit had been kindly taken.

And now, Henry after having made all his plans so far as he could, in his present confused state of mind, sat quietly down to read a few passages from those heavenly instructions to which he daily resorted. A calm, like the stillness of a summer sunset, stole over him, his courage began to revive—light streaks began to shoot up from his horizon, the dark clouds were tinged, and their aspect changed. And as one beneath his father's roof has lost all care and is at rest; so he laid him down in peace and slept.

It was about nine o'clock the next morning that he entered the clothing establishment of Messrs. W. & Co., with the bill which they had sent him in his hand. He recognized at

once the gentleman who had waited upon Evart and himself. It was the elder partner of the concern, a short man, neatly dressed, with a pleasant countenance, and easy manners. And very soon the gentleman recognized him, although they had not met since the goods were purchased.

Henry stated his business in as few words as possible, and although he endeavored not to throw any blame upon Evart, he was obliged to acknowledge, in some measure, that his receipt of the bill was somewhat unexpected.

"I was aware of that," said the gentleman; "Mr. Marston mentioned to me at the time that he would see the bill paid, although I had charged them to you; and when I made out his account lately, he requested me to have the amount put in and sent altogether to his guardian.

"It happened, however, that our book-keeper in making out the account put your bill in at the bottom as a separate item, as articles purchased by you and to be paid for by Mr. Marston. But the old gentleman would not pay it; you see, the trouble is, that young Mr. Marston has of late become rather careless in spending money, and I fear is beginning to make an improper use of it, and has perhaps drawn largely; more so than his allowance will warrant. I am sorry for it, as I have thought him likely to turn out well; he has seemed to me quite moderate for a young man of property, but I expect he is too intimate with some who are no better than they should be.

"I am sorry it has happened so. I have said nothing to Mr. Marston about it, but as one of the clerks told me that you were living with Sharp & Co., I ordered him to leave the bill at their store, that you might be informed how it was, as you might wish to see Mr. Marston yourself about it. I have no doubt he will yet pay it."

"I should much prefer to pay it myself, sir, and should be very sorry that Mr. Marston should know anything about it. I ought at the time to have been more decided, and not allowed him to purchase the clothes. He did it, however, from the kindest feelings, and I have do doubt, with the most honorable intentions. But, sir, I cannot pay you all now. Here is all the money I have."

And Henry took out his nineteen dollars and handed it to the gentleman.

"It is all I have got, and if you could allow me to retain five dollars of it, until I get a situation, I should be very thankful. It would pay my board for a couple of weeks. But I leave that entirely with yourself."

"Are you not living with Sharp & Catchem?"

"Not now, sir."

"When did you leave?"

"Yesterday, sir. Mr. Sharp dismissed me yesterday afternoon."

"Did he give you the reason for it?"

"He did not, sir; but I apprehend the reason was, that I interfered to protect my friend, Evart Marston, from a violent attack made upon him by Mr. Puffem, the head clerk of Mr. Sharp."

And then Henry related the particulars of the affair, and his only motive for interfering as he did.

"Does Marston know that you have lost your situation in consequence?"

"Oh no, sir! I do not wish him to know it. I think he is heartily sorry for the whole of his part in it, and I hope it may do him good. I should be sorry to add to his present unpleasant feelings."

"You seem to be a true friend of Marston, at any rate."

"He has been very kind to me, sir. I know he has a noble spirit, and if he would only abandon some of his companions it would be a great thing for him."

"Well; now my young friend, I cannot take this money under all these circumstances."

Handing it at the same time back to Henry, who looked quite mortified and down-cast; judging of course, that so small a part was not acceptable.

"You will probably find that it will take a longer time than you now anticipate to get a situation. You are not known here, it seems; and the fact of being dismissed by Mr. Sharp will prevent you from referring persons to him, and that will make it hard for you. No, no, keep your money; we are not afraid about our bill; I will answer for it you will pay it one of these days, only keep up a good heart." And the gentleman, as he said this, put his hand on Henry's shoulder. "You will find something to do after a while, and you can pay this bill just when it suits your own convenience; and I promise

you not a word shall be said to Marston about it; will that answer you?"

It was not possible for Henry to reply. The return of his money so unexpectedly; the kind manner and the kind words addressed to him, under such circumstances, were too much for his excited feelings. He was about, however, after a few moments' silence, to say something in return, when a gentleman, who, it seems, had been a witness of the interview, although unnoticed by Henry, arose from his seat, not far from where Mr. W. and Henry were standing, and advanced towards them. He was tall of stature, of a serious cast of countenance, and with a peculiarly penetrating eye; apparently not yet of middle age.

"Mr. W., does this young man want a situation?"

"I presume so, Mr. Blenham."

"I do, sir," said Henry, answering promptly.

"You have been living, you say, with Messrs. Sharp, Catchem, & Co.?"

"I have, sir;" and then Henry repeated what he had already told Mr. W. of the circumstances under which he had left, while the gentleman kept his eye keenly fixed upon him.

"And the trouble is," said Mr. W., "that he will not be able to refer to those gentlemen, and he has lived nowhere else in the city."

"I am in want of a person of your age; would you have any objections to go with me to Messrs. Sharp, Catchem, & Co.? I know Mr. Sharp pretty well, and shall be able, no doubt, to ascertain what the difficulty is, and if there is nothing else beyond what you suppose to be the cause why you have been dismissed, perhaps we can make an arrangement together."

"I know of nothing else, sir, and have no objections whatever to go there with you."

As Henry was about to follow Mr. Blenham from the store, Mr. W. took him by the arm, and, in a low voice, said—

"Mr. Blenham is a partner in a very wealthy house in the China trade; a fine man. You will have a good chance to do well if you please him. Keep up a good heart; be open and above board with him."

"I will, sir."

Mr. Sharp seemed somewhat surprised to see Henry enter his store in such company, but he was too much occupied in obsequious attentions to the gentleman by whose side Henry was (Mr. Blenham was a bank director) to take particular notice of him. Mr. Blenham informed Mr. Sharp that he would like to say a few words to him in private, and immediately the former gentleman and his protégé were conducted to the farther part of the store.

"This young man has been living with you, he tells me."

"Yes, sir, he has, some months."

"And you dismissed him, I understand."

"I did, sir."

"As I am somewhat interested in the matter, may I ask what were your reasons for so doing?"

"Why, sir—why, sir—we are not in the habit of giving special reasons any time we dismiss a clerk, at least not to them; we think it enough that they do not answer our turn. I say, in general we do not."

"But you know, Mr. Sharp a young man situated as this young gentleman is, has no means of sustaining himself without a character, and that can only be properly obtained from those who have employed him."

"True, sir, true; and I gave him warning some time ago, that if he was not more particular about his associates I could not keep him."

Henry had informed Mr. Blenham of this also.

"Are you sure, Mr. Sharp, that he was in the habit of associating with improper persons, or sought their company?"

Mr. Sharp then went into a detail of all he had seen and heard, with a particular account of the affray in which Henry had mingled, and taken, as Mr. Sharp said, such a disgraceful part.

Mr. Blenham listened to him very patiently through the whole narration, during which Henry had to hear many things which were quite untrue so far as he was concerned, and very different from the representation of the affair which he had made to Mr. Blenham; and tried once or twice to correct the statement, but was silenced by Mr. Sharp with a very indignant frown.

When Mr. Sharp had concluded, Mr. Blenham very calmly asked—

"And is this all, Mr. Sharp, which you have against this young man?"

"All, sir! I think you will say, Mr. Blenham—put it to your own case—it is quite enough."

"It might be, Mr. Sharp, if the statement was correct. But allow me to tell you that I was accidentally a witness of the whole scene." Henry looked at Mr. Blenham with amazement. "I saw every motion of this young man, and was one that prevented your head clerk from venting his rage upon him. However much his friend may have been in the wrong, this youth did nothing for which he deserves any blame; but, on the contrary, endeavored to prevent evil; and finally induced his friend to depart from the disgraceful *mêlée;* and I am very glad, Mr. Sharp, that I happened to be there. You and I both know, sir, what it is to begin at the very beginning ourselves; and that an unfriended youth, with a stigma upon his character, is, in such a city as this, very unpleasantly and even dangerously situated."

"Certainly, sir, certainly Mr. Blenham, I am aware of that; and I would be the last person to injure any one, especially a youth. I certainly have nothing against him personally, and if he will only make up matters with Mr. Puffem, why—I—I—would really say—I have no objections—no objections at all to receive him back. There are, indeed, several applications—but"——

"Oh, well, sir, it was not for that object we called. I believe it would not be best under the circumstances. I comprehend the case now; good morning, Mr. Sharp."

"Good morning, sir."

And Mr. Sharp walked rapidly back to his place behind the counter, casting, at the same time, some rather severe glances at Mr. Puffem, and looking daggers at Mr. Belden, who seemed to have forgotten all about his accounts, and, with his pen tucked away among his bushy earlocks, was making sundry expressive signs with his mouth as Henry passed him. The bright aspect of Henry's countenance seemed to have created quite a commotion in the mind of the bookkeeper. It was a small matter, but very marvellous to Mr. Sharp, and he treasured it up among a few other small matters which began to operate in his mind against Mr. Belden.

It would be of no avail now, to name a certain substantial,

old-fashioned, three-storied house in Pearl street, near what was once called Sloat lane; for everything in that vicinity has been swept away by the great fire, and all now is new. But perhaps some readers may be able to remember that there were commodious dwelling houses in that locality, with stores below—or offices; with large yards in the rear, running back against other large yards, belonging to some noble buildings in Wall street, where families of wealth and distinction lived and seemed to enjoy life. Trees flourished in these yards, and the sun had plenty of room to shed his genial light and heat; and birds resorted there—where, in early mornings and on Sabbath days, their voices could be heard so as almost to make one forget that the country was far away.

It was in one of these houses in Pearl street, that the firm of Ralph & Co. did business. At the time we are designating, a small tin plate, from which the black paint and gilt letters were almost obliterated by the wear and tear of time, but on which the name of the above-mentioned firm was still visible, alone gave any notice that it was a place of business; for the only entrance to the office was through the hall-door of the dwelling. This door was usually open, and an inner one shut off access to the dwelling; and you entered on the left hand a front room, apparently unused except that a few trunks and boxes lay scattered about against its walls; from this a glass door opened into a spacious office in the rear, neatly carpeted, with a large mahogany desk between the two windows, and on each side of that, mahogany escritoirs, with a large cushioned chair at each. This office had a very cheerful aspect, the windows opening into a large yard, and everything there and within the room being in the most complete order.

The name of Ralph & Co., merely designated an old firm; the business being now carried on by two brothers, Messrs. Thomas and Henry Blenham; the elder brother, Thomas Blenham, having been a partner of Mr. Ralph, at the decease of the last-named gentleman, had taken his brother Henry into the concern.

They were, or, more properly, had been, largely engaged in the tea and silk business; for at the time they are introduced to the reader, but little business of any kind was car-

ried on. War with England had put a stop to trade; and although the mediatorial offers of Russia afforded a hopeful prospect of returning peace; yet few were actively engaged in mercantile transactions, but such as were alive with the spirit of speculation. The Messrs. Blenham had accumulated a handsome property by their regular business, and did not choose to turn aside from that; and were, therefore, not fascinated by the temptation to which many yielded. They were now merely "lying at their oars," and waiting until the difficulties between the two countries should be settled.

They were bachelors, and lived together and kept what was then called "bachelors' hall." They occupied the upper part of the house for that purpose; which was well furnished; genteelly but with no attempt at show.

Besides themselves—two colored persons, a man and his wife, the latter as housemaid and cook, and the former waiter and hostler—were the only persons attached to the family.

As Mr. Henry Blenham entered the office, in company with Henry, he merely remarked to his brother, who was seated at one of the side desks, and appeared to be, as he really was, much the elder of the two:

"This young man has come with me that we may give him a trial, to see if he will answer our turn."

The gentleman thus addressed, cast a glance at Henry; there was a slight brightening up of his features; a gentle inclination of his head; and then he resumed his position, and went on with his writing.

In a moment more Henry was standing at the large desk and engaged in copying a long account, which had been placed before him, and Mr. Blenham remarked as he did so:

"As I wish to send away the copy you are making, let it be as much better than the original as possible."

And after this was completed, other matters were put into his hand; some letters were given him to copy, and in various ways his ability with the pen was tested. He had, likewise, a few errands to perform; some bank business to do; and one or two accounts to collect. Whether what he had done was satisfactory he could not tell, for nothing was said; neither partner apparently being much in the habit of talking. And, although, when he was addressed, it was in a mild, pleasant manner, quite in contrast with what he had

of late been accustomed to; yet no useless words were expended—nothing more than seemed absolutely necessary.

At three o'clock, the gentlemen withdrew to their rooms for dinner—Henry having been called to his at an earlier hour—and it was not until quite late in the afternoon that Mr. Henry Blenham appeared. He then looked over some matters that he had given Henry to prepare—cast his eye over the desk and around the room, as if inspecting the manner in which things had been arranged—and then taking his seat, asked:

"How do you think you would like such employments as have occupied you to-day?"

"I should be perfectly satisfied, sir, if my services are only acceptable to you."

"One day is scarcely sufficient as a test on either side; but if you feel disposed to place yourself under our care, and do your best in our service, we will venture to keep you. Our object is not so much to have one who can do what you have done to-day, and serve our turn in these little matters, as it is to have a young person, in whom we can perfectly confide, and who will so identify himself with our interests, that we can take pleasure in advancing him; and when of sufficient age, can send him abroad, should our business demand it. We do not want a mere hireling—such, at times, we are obliged to have—but I tell you frankly this is not our expectation in making this engagement. From some circumstances I have learned in reference to you, I cannot but hope you may prove to be what we have been in search of—one who will blend himself with our interests, and in whom we can place implicit confidence—you understand me, Henry?"

"I think I do, sir."

"We should prefer to have you live in our family; so you will have no occasion to spend any money for board; and I think one hundred dollars a year will find you in clothes and other little matters—and you can draw for that as you need. If these terms are satisfactory, you may consider the engagement settled."

The whole affair from his first introduction to Mr. Blenham, was so extraordinary and astounding to Henry, that he was almost at a loss what to say. That he should be taken, in the hour of his extremity, and placed, under such circum-

stances, with persons who were perfect strangers to him, was such a token of divine care, that his whole mind was, for the moment, absorbed in contemplation. Not giving an immediate answer, Mr. Blenham spoke again—

"Perhaps you have some better prospect, and do not wish the place."

"Oh, pardon me, sir! I was thinking of your great kindness to me in making such an offer. I only hope I may be able to serve you so that your expectations may be realized. It is far above what I could possibly have hoped for."

"How much did Mr. Sharp give you?"

"One hundred dollars, sir."

"And your board?"

"Oh, no, sir; I found myself."

"How could you do that?"

"I lived very plain, sir."

Mr. Blenham made some remark which Henry did not hear, but it sounded very much like a harsh epithet coupled to the name of his late employer.

"Well, Henry, now you will have no care about your personal wants, and can turn your whole attention to the business before you. Your interests will not be lost sight of by us while you are attending to ours. We will give you a fair chance to make a man of yourself."

That night Henry found himself the occupant of a pleasant room in the back building of the house, where everything was provided in such style as he had not seen since he left his friends the Marstons.

Sweet is the song of the little warbler that, upon its perch for the night, tells to the quiet listener its tale of gladness; and that no care disturbs—no sorrow mars its being. But sweeter far is the incense from the humble, grateful heart; when, reviewing the mercies of the day, it sends its warm emotions up to heaven, and sinks to rest as in the arms of everlasting love. Blest youth! you have begun with God; and although the thorns which hedge the path of life may often pierce you, and the clouds which sweep across it envelop you in their dark shadows, yet strange will it be if, amid darkness and grief, you do not find some bright ray to cheer, or some balm to heal.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"Why, Evart Marston! A good day to you."

And Mr. Vernon, as he said this, took the young gentleman by the hand, as he entered his parlor, where the latter was sitting.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, but I was just concluding a letter which I wished to send off in time for the mail. How are all at home?"

"Quite well, I thank you, sir. I hope I have not intruded, Mr. Vernon; I know it is rather early for making calls."

"Not too early for me, I assure you. I follow, you know, my own fashions, and live quite independently. Bachelors are not so particularly bound by common rules as some other folks are."

"If you are not perfectly at leisure, sir, I will take some other opportunity; but I feel quite anxious to have some conversation with you in regard to a few personal matters of my own."

"I am at your service for just as long as you please."

Mr. Vernon was sincere in his offer, although it was impossible for him to conceive what Evart could have to communicate. He had tried in various ways to influence him, not only to avoid certain courses of conduct, which he believed would, if persisted in, prove his ruin, but had urged him to select some profession or species of business, if for nothing else that his mind might be properly occupied. And he felt very confident that for some time Evart had avoided his presence. What could have brought him now was therefore to Mr. Vernon quite a mystery.

"You have sometimes spoken to me, Mr. Vernon, about my engaging in some employment as a preparation for future life; and I fear I have not paid quite that regard to your advice which your kind interest for me demanded. But it would be a great favor to me now to have your counsel on this subject. I feel that the course I have been pursuing for some time is not likely to make me either useful or happy."

"What kind of business have you been thinking of?"

"I cannot say that I have made any selection. In fact it is very difficult for me to fix upon any. You know money-making will not be necessary. You would not advise me to any branch of mercantile business?"

"Not without you had a decided preference for it. There is quite a choice—the field is large. I am aware that there is no actual necessity so far as the making of money is concerned. You will doubtless have enough, and more than enough, to enable you to live handsomely. But the employment of one's mind is a great consideration; and in some branches of business there is scope for the exercise of all our faculties. You will become better acquainted with mankind in general. Intercourse with men of enterprise and energy will tend to quicken your own powers and enlarge your views. You will also become more familiar with the state and condition of our own country and of foreign lands. And you will comprehend more clearly the great secrets of individual and national success. Much good to others may also in this way be accomplished. Large mercantile establishments necessarily give employment to many, and of consequence a support, and among these are almost always to be found some who need assistance, and who, by a little timely aid, may themselves rise to independence. On these accounts business affords advantages beyond the mere acquisition of gain.

"There is, however, another side to the picture. There are risks and trials, reverses and misfortunes. Unforeseen events will sometimes blast the finest plans. They, however, sometimes overtake others besides those engaged in traffic. Perhaps you have your mind on some profession?"

"Indeed, Mr. Vernon, I have not thought particularly what calling to pursue; but for some days my mind has been intently occupied in considering my present situation. I cannot bear the thought of being any longer a mere idler in life. I know I have money enough; I need not labor for a living. I can, when of age, settle in life. I can live in good style; I can keep my carriage and indulge my tastes, and can spend my time as I please. Sometimes in the city, during the winter, where every variety of amusement will be at my command. And in summer I can while it away in the country. But what will it all amount to? Shall I be happy without

any care, any responsibility, any particular aim? It looks forbidding to me. I want your advice."

"You have been thinking to some good purpose, I trust, Evart, and have arrived at some very just conclusions. In order to be happy we must have some great aim in life—something to do—something which depends upon our exertions and faithfulness, upon our foresight and wisdom. *Merely to enjoy life, is not living.* I feel most happy on your account to hear you express such views. But may I ask you what first led you to such a train of thought?"

Evart then related in a perfectly frank way the circumstances which first opened his eyes; the conversation he had held with Henry Thornton, and last of all he told him particularly about the little treasure which Henry had put into his hand; "and here it is," said Evart; "it is a leaf from the Bible, and you have no doubt read it a great many times; but I had not, and never before did any words take hold of my heart as these had done. Please do not tear it, sir, for he thinks a great deal of it."

Evart said this because Mr. Vernon, when excited, was very rapid in his motions, and his eagerness to see what portion of scripture it was, caused him to grasp it quickly from the hand of his young friend.

"Well, well, well, Evart; I do not know the young man—whether he is rich or poor, and care as little. If he has chosen these as his directions through this slippery world, his feet will be very apt to find a firm resting-place at the worst of times. Such a friend or companion as he must be, is worth having."

"He is, indeed, sir; I admire him; I love him; he is a noble fellow; worth all the other friends I have. He is poor; but a gentleman in heart and behavior. I wish I could have the privilege of introducing him to you, Mr. Vernon; he has no friend in the city but myself."

"Do so; do so, by all means; I should esteem it a privilege to become acquainted with such a youth."

Their conversation was just then interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Vernon's elder sister; a lady somewhat advanced in years, of very dignified mien, and a remarkably placid and agreeable countenance. She at once recognized Evart, and he arose to meet her. Almost immediately the attention of

the young gentleman was arrested by the appearance of another lady, quite in contrast with the one he was addressing; for she was quite young, and with a most fascinating countenance; at least we venture to say so from the electric power which it exercised upon the young man. He almost, at the moment, forgot the proprieties; he made no reply to questions which had been put to him respecting his mother; but seemed rapt in astonishment at the beautiful vision which had burst upon him. Miss Vernon turned to see what had thus attracted his attention, and at once exclaimed:

"Oh, Miss Louise, I did not think you had come down!"

Both ladies were about to take a walk, and were arrayed accordingly; Miss Vernon had come in to say a word to her brother, not expecting to find any one besides him in the parlor, and the young lady, seeing the door open and hearing the voice of the former, very naturally entered to let her know that she was ready.

"Miss Lovelace, Mr Marston."

Evart was quite himself again as he made his polite obeisance; but Mr. Vernon and his sister both noticed how the color rose to his face, and how absorbed he was on first noticing Louise. The young lady returned his salutation in a very formal manner; she did not speak, and maintained her position just within the door; waiting patiently until Miss Vernon was ready to accompany her.

As they were about to depart, Mr. Vernon made a playful remark to Louise, which she answered by a smile that lighted up her beautiful features with a radiance peculiarly its own. The smile of Louise had an effect on her serious cast of countenance like that of a sunbeam on the leaves of autumn.

Evart saw it; never before had a smile so touched his heart; there was a fascination in it that clung to him long after she had left his presence.

With all his heart he wished that his friend might enter into some explanation, as to who she was, and whether a member of his family, or a mere visitor of an hour. But Mr. Vernon, so soon as they had gone, resumed the subject of conversation which had previously engaged them.

"You tell me, Evart, that you have broken off all inter course with your former companions?"

I cannot say that, sir; I feel very kindly towards them, and have done nothing that ought to hinder friendly feelings or friendly intercourse."

"Very true; but the fact of your taking the stand you tell me you have taken; and the conversation which you have related to me as having held with them, will, in all probability, lead to a separation; they will not likely seek your society; and you, I trust, will not be anxious to go after them."

"I certainly shall not, Mr. Vernon; I am decided as to that."

"Just so; you will for a time, then, be rather alone."

"I want to be, sir."

"Yes; but you must have something to engage your mind. Suppose, now, as a preliminary step to the great subject we have been upon, I should propose to you a course of reading; you have not, perhaps, read systematically."

"I have scarcely read at all, sir."

"Are you willing to begin?"

"Most heartily, sir."

"In your library, I know, are all the most useful works; but in order to read them profitably and with satisfaction, you need to be directed; I will, to-morrow, probably, call at your house and look over the library, and make a little selection for you. 'It is not good that the mind be without knowledge.' A taste for reading is an absolute necessity not only for our usefulness, but for our happiness; and you would wish to cultivate such a taste as will lead you to choose that kind of reading which will inform the mind and make the heart better. Shall I be your Mentor?"

"Most truly, Mr. Vernon, I wish you to be; I have no one but you to whom, as I now feel, I can look for the guidance I need."

"You shall have it, my dear Evart, with all my heart; and my desire is that you make a confident of me, if you feel you can do so. I am ready to be your friend; my house is open to you at all times; your company here will be very acceptable; I think we shall have much to talk about; you will be reading works which are familiar to me—or which have been, years ago—and it will be a pleasure to me to have my memory quickened on topics with which I was once

much interested; I shall anticipate many pleasant evenings with you in our family circle. But one thing I must say to you." Evart had risen, and was about to take his leave; Mr. Vernon had not forgotten the thought he was about to suggest; but he had his own way of doing things; he had great confidence in the power of one idea, thrown out, as it were, without forethought or previous design. "I was going to say to you," and he put his hand on the shoulder of the youth, "that these instructions which are so clearly given to us in the Scriptures, and especially that portion of them which has attracted your notice, involve something beyond a mere external conformity to certain rules. Perhaps as you study them—which I hope you will—my meaning will be more evident. *It is a great thing to have the heart brought into unison with the divine precepts.*"

It was well for Evart that Mr. Vernon had chosen to drop this hint at the very close of their interview. He did not, indeed, comprehend its full meaning; but the words remained fixed in his mind: "It is a great thing to have the heart brought into unison with the divine precepts." Again, and again, he repeated them on his way homeward; he seemed anxious not to forget them; he knew there must be something in the idea, of more consequence than he was then able to apprehend, or Mr. Vernon would not have delivered the sentiment in such an emphatic manner. He resolved to pry into the mystery; and as he had been requested, would study more closely than he had as yet done, not only the little leaf which Henry had given him, but other parts of the Holy Word.

Mr. Vernon, to his great regret, had lost all trace of Caroline Jeralman. She had not returned to Stratton; nor could he find any clue as to the probable course she took when leaving her haunt at that place. At times he was forced to the conclusion that Caroline Jeralman and Jane Byfield were one and the same person. If so, he feared she had doubtless perished in the flames at Tyrrel place, as Miss Hasbrook had assured him. The only hope which he at all indulged was, that possibly Jane and her father had fled together. It was, indeed, said that the old man was very hostile to his daughter; but that was so while he himself was in favor. It might have been, on ascertaining that Jane had been received by the "young mistress," and fearing the consequences, he may have

sought an interview with his daughter, and persuaded her to escape with him, lest their crime should be visited upon them. This, indeed, would have appeared plausible, if he had taken any of his property with him; but the fact of his leaving even his better clothes, and all his money, almost forbade the idea.

His friend, Captain Marston, had sailed early in the winter from Boston, expecting to visit several of the West India islands, for the purpose of closing up some old unsettled business, and to avoid the severity of winter, having been alarmed the last season by some symptoms of pulmonary disease. It was quite a relief to Mr. Vernon to be freed from the necessity of corresponding upon a subject so beset with perplexities, and on which he dared not deliver his real sentiments; he could say nothing definite, and a shadow of uncertainty would have been as fatal to all parties as perfect ignorance.

That Louise was the child of his friends, he had himself scarcely a doubt; he had found all the links in the chain but one. That, however, was the most important of all. One human being alone could testify to that, which, if wanting in the chain of evidence, would nullify all the rest.

He had become much attached to Louise; he found her to be far superior to those of her own age with whom he had been acquainted. The peculiarity of her situation had induced a thoughtful habit; she had learned, by reasoning on the future consequences to herself and others, in regard to the uncertainty of her parentage, to balance in her mind other subjects of interest, so as to form definite conclusions; she manifested a fixedness of purpose not common with one of her years, and if sometimes it seemed to border on obstinacy, it was equally manifest that she acted from reasons which, to her own mind at least, were proper and all-sufficient.

The change of place and scenes, however, had not proved as salutary as Mr. Vernon hoped they might. The cause of disturbance was too deeply impressed to be thus removed; and as months were added to her age, the more keen became her sensibility. There was no joy to be derived by her from those circumstances in life that would have filled the heart of most young persons with a fine flow of spirits. She could not but hear at times the whispers of unwise acquaintances, who were filled with admiration at her fine form and beautiful counte-

nance, as well as her easy manners; but no fire was kindled in her breast. What was beauty to her? or grace of manner? or wealth? She knew that to the latter was, in general, attached much consequence; it had charms not only to those whose base spirits have no other shrine, but even to those who were worthy of all praise. To her it seemed only a burden—an attachment that, by a kind of necessity, placed her where she was a conspicuous mark. She could not, indeed, know from her own experience how much more desolate she would be without it, and therefore only looked upon it as an aggravation of the trial to which her life was doomed.

Mr. Vernon knew all this; he had frequent and free conversations with her, and, so far as she could, she opened her heart to him. One feature in her case, however, presented a hopeful aspect: she was fond of reading; a book seemed to connect her with past days, when her young heart had no trouble—when, thoughtless of the past or future, she used to sit by Henry and look over the page with him, and talk about the birds and flowers. Then, indeed, it was the story, or the picture, that amused; but by degress a thirst for knowledge was awakened. She remembered how Henry often told her of the interest he felt in reading about ages of the world long past, and of the changes which had passed upon the nations; and of the doings of great men, of wars and warriors, martyrs and reformers; and whatever Henry had loved, she loved; and whatever he took an interest in, had a peculiar charm for her. How much this had to do with her present feelings, we cannot say; but that she loved to read, and that no subject of interest to an active mind, however drily it might be presented, was distasteful to her, Mr. Vernon knew, and he had with care selected for her, mingling the romantic and beautiful with that which was stern and real.

Nor had he failed, as opportunity occurred, to throw in thoughts about the world to come; our fitness for it, the heart's corrupt condition, and of the great change which we must pass through, before we can judge or feel aright. But he had not yet been able to prevail upon Louise to say whether her views were like his own, or what they were; he rather thought, by some unhappy cause, religion—that which has its seat within the heart—was not a theme she liked, or

else some dark cloud rested upon it, through which she could not see. There was nothing, however, in her life that might not have been the effect of grace. Her manner was most mild and lovely, and even when her strong will was crossed, although her opinion might not be changed, she yielded with docility.

But what gave him most concern, was the settled sadness that had become evident, even to casual visitors; at times, indeed, a bright smile would light up her sweet face, but it passed quickly away, just like a meteor across the dark sky. It was evident that one forbidding idea had the ascendency, and unless nullified, or its cause removed, the result might be what those who loved her dared hardly whisper to each other.

Louise was in the habit of corresponding with Mrs. Thompson and her cousins, as she still called them. And she called them so now, for the reason that, when separated from those with whom she had so long lived, the affection she truly had for them was made more sensible to her own heart. Their uniform kindness and their considerate regard for her peculiar situation was remembered by her, and thought more of, as her mind became more mature and capable of forming a correct judgment. Her fear, and we might almost say dislike, of the father, never for one moment biased her against them.

One day, on opening a letter from them, she found an inclosure directed to her from the city of New York, for it had that post-mark upon it. Of course it had not been opened. She broke the seal. It had neither name nor address; but in a plain neat hand was written, or rather painted, with a pen, simply the word MIZPAH.

She knew not the handwriting, and at once supposed that some person—whom, she could not imagine—had designed it for sport, or for some reason not even so laudable as that. Not knowing what the word meant, and with more or less apprehension that its solution might only be a cause of annoyance, she retained it a day or two, without making any attempt to gain information on the subject. Perhaps, too, there was some sensitiveness lest she might encounter the friendly smile of the Misses Vernon at the singularity of the epistle, or because of her ignorance of its contents.

At length she resolved to apply to Mr. Vernon. "He never

smiled at her ignorance, and if there was anything wrong about it, he was the proper one to go to." So, taking the letter in her hand, she went into the library, where he was generally to be found when alone; and placing it before him, simply related how she had received it, and then said:

"Can you decipher its meaning?"

"That I can, dear Louise. What a beautiful idea! But no name! It must be from some friend, who anticipates that your knowledge of the word and the circumstances of your relation to each other, will make it all plain to you without the signature. A beautiful idea, though—and with more meaning to it, and conveying the sentiments of true friendship more forcibly, than would many pages such as friends commonly address to each other."

Louise was much excited and very impatient to hear its interpretation, but she remained perfectly silent; only wondering more than ever what its signification could be. Mr. Vernon then asked Louise to bring his Bible from the table.

"Now, my dear, just turn to—stay, I forget the chapter." And taking it from the anxious girl, turned in a moment to Genesis, and finding the thirty-first chapter, pointed with his finger to the forty-ninth verse.

"Read it for yourself."

She looked steadily at the passage for some time: perhaps she did not comprehend the whole matter at once, or her heart was filled with such intense emotion that she wished to read it again and again.

Mr. Vernon perceived that whatever had been dark about it was now made clear. Her flushed face, her intent look, and the silent tear that came stealing down her fair cheek, assured him that the mystery was unravelled.

He did not wish to pry into the secret, whatever it might be; and was really rejoiced to find that she was still so susceptible, and that in spite of all her determination to shut in those feelings which others might safely indulge, she could yet reciprocate true love—for he had no doubt it was a token of that nature.

But, firm in his determination not to appear to watch her, and merely to stand ready as a friend and guide whenever she should ask his aid or counsel, he said nothing.

Louise thanked him for his kindness, and walked slowly to-

wards the door, as though about to leave the room. She paused a moment, and then came back.

"Mr. Vernon, I cannot keep anything from you—I must tell you."

The effort to speak proved more than she was equal to; her heart was overcharged, and she gave way to a flood of tears. It was some time before the storm subsided, so as to allow her to unburden her mind. She then, with all the confidence of a child in a parent, unfolded to Mr. Vernon her regard for Henry. She told him how they had become acquainted; how considerate and kind he had been; how mild was his temper; how agreeable his manners; how fond he was of gaining knowledge; and how he had induced her to attend to the improvement of her mind. She told him of their last parting, and how he was compelled to leave his home and was thrown upon the wide world; and how she had tried to induce him to take money from her own purse, but in vain; and that the reason why she told all this was, that Mr. Vernon should, if possible, find him out, and learn how he was situated. "It might be he was in trouble; he was so sensitive and so anxious to take care of himself, that he would suffer a great deal before he would let any one know it; and she would rather suffer herself than Henry should be in want." And then she paused.

"I see clearly, my dear Louise, that you are much interested in this youth;—you truly love him, do you not?"

"I do, sir, most truly."

"And do you think he has an equal regard for you?"

"Yes, sir, I am very sure of it."

"You are very young yet, Louise, to be serious, as you seem to be, about such a matter; almost too young. Have you a mutual understanding on the subject?"

"I do not know, Mr. Vernon, that I comprehend your meaning."

"Well, my dear Louise, what I mean is—has he told you how he feels toward you, and have you allowed him to understand that you are equally interested in him?"

"Oh, yes, sir; we understand each other perfectly. We were like brother and sister; and a sister I must ever be to him."

"True; but you know, Louise, you are becoming older

every day. Feelings such as you describe may be well enough for young girls and boys; but he must be verging towards manhood, and you are now quite a young lady. You cannot expect to maintain such a relationship as you have been imagining. It will either pass off, as is commonly the case, or it will result in a stronger bond than that of brother and sister."

"That can never be, Mr. Vernon. Do you think I would have allowed one I value so much to be bound to me, or to think of linking himself with me? No, sir—never!"

"And does he know of your determination in this respect?'

"Yes, sir."

"And does he know about your great trial?"

"He does, sir."

"And is he perfectly willing that thus it should be; and at no future time would he care to bring your friendship into closer bonds?"

"Mr. Vernon, you know, as you have just said, we are both young. *I* know that, in regard to my own purpose, nothing can ever change it; but he does not know how he will feel some years hence. He thinks my situation is of no consequence, but he will not always think so; and would I not be very unkind and unwise to allow him for a moment to feel that we can be anything more to each other than we now are?"

Mr. Vernon was silent a few moments; at length, laying his hand on the arm of Louise—

"I find, dear Louise, that you are more fit to be trusted with your own affairs than I just now thought for. I promise you I will take measures to ascertain whether this young man is in the city, and will try to learn how he is situated; and if I succeed, you shall know all about him. Is any one else aware of the circumstances?"

"No human being."

"That is well; I shall not betray your trust."

## CHAPTER XVII.

It was some weeks after Henry had been snugly settled in his new quarters; he had closed the office, and, leaving the house, walked with a very quick step up Pearl to John street, and then up the latter into William street, and, at a few doors from the corner, stepped up and rang the bell of a plain, old-fashioned, three-story dwelling; as the door was opened, he asked—

"Does Mr. Belden live here?"

"He does, sir; you will find him in his room, the third story, front room."

As soon as Henry knocked, a quick step was heard, and in a moment the door was opened.

"My dear fellow, how *are* you?—come in."

Mr. Belden's appearance was rather more flurried than usual. His hair, generally bushy, was now standing all ways, as though he had been shaking it violently, or running both hands through it, as he was apt to do when much excited. He had no coat on, and rather loose slippers were supplying the place of his neatly polished boots. His face, too, was quite red, but Henry could account for that by seeing a lively fire on the hearth, and a saucepan, with something therein, stewing upon some coals drawn out upon it, with a coffee-pot beside it, sending forth in its steam a very agreeable odor through the apartment. A small table was standing in the centre of the room, covered with an oil-cloth, and on it a plate of crackers, a roll of butter, a cup and saucer, and an empty plate, with knife and fork attached, and a small castor-stand; in fact, everything gave token that Mr. Belden was preparing to have a private supper.

"I am very sorry," said Henry, as soon as he saw how matters stood, "that I have come so early, Mr. Belden; but I was so anxious to see you."

"What are you sorry for?"

"Oh, well, I supposed you had done supper, and I had no idea"——

"Never mind the ideas; supposed I had my supper!—well, so I have; what they call supper, or tea, or whatever it is; but what is it?—it will do as a kind of form, but it won't keep a man alive till morning—not if he's been through what *I* have this day. Slop fodder will do sometimes, but when there's an extra wear and tear upon a man, you see, that's another thing."

"Have you had hard work to-day, sir?"

"Hard work!—yes." And then Mr. Belden dived down at his skillet, and, pulling it from the coals, hurried to his closet, and bringing thence a large bowl, emptied into it the contents of the smoking utensil which he carried in his other hand—some of the finest-looking oysters Henry had ever seen—saying, at the same time—

"You see, I don't trust my carcass to sour bread and slop tea. A man has got to take care of himself. Come, now, sit down, you're not going to stir; there's enough for both of us here. These oysters have swelled amazingly—wouldn't have thought it—glad you've come—been thinking about you—I knew you had better taken a little at the time, but it will be all the same; I've got some coppers yet," giving his pocket a slap, "only I'm afraid you have been pinching it too hard. But you look chirp; I rather guess you are of that sort, like David, or Daniel, or somebody or other whom I read of when I was a youngster, who grew fat on pulse, though what pulse was is more than I know; I don't believe it was crackers and cheese. But you do look chirp; aint down-hearted, are you?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"That's right, keep the pluck up, come what will. Come, now, sit right down and help me eat these oysters."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Belden, I have eaten a hearty supper."

"Don't believe a word of it; sit down, I say."

And Henry, without further parley, took a seat by the table, but had hard work to keep Mr. Belden from helping him to a larger supply of oysters than would have sufficed had he really been, as Mr. Belden said, "pinching it."

"I am so glad you happened in; kills two birds with one stone; eat hearty now; keep up your spirits; I've got some left yet. How long have you been out?"

Henry not comprehending what his friend meant, looked at him a moment.

"Out, I say—out of cash? You know you promised me to come, and I've been looking for you every day; eat hearty; you'll find Joe Belden as good as his word."

"Oh, Mr. Belden, I thank you very much, but I have got along wonderfully."

"I should think you had, to make a live of it so long; you hadn't much, *I* know."

"Oh, sir, but I got an excellent place the very next day."

Mr. Belden laid down his knife and fork, and looked with the most profound amazement at Henry, who could not repress a smile at his earnest manner.

"Who got it for you?"

"Oh, sir, it was very wonderful!" And then Henry gave him a full account of all that had transpired at Messrs. W. & Co's., while Mr. Belden progressed with the work before him. Slipping the oysters out of the way with most remarkable celerity, and apparent satisfaction; so much so, that he had finished and shoved away his plate long before the narrative was through; and he sat looking in a wild, confused manner, sometimes at Henry, and sometimes up at the ceiling. When Henry paused, Mr. Belden fixed his eye steadily upon him.

"Young man, you're lucky! and I tell you what I think, you belong to somebody or other, that has done something or other, that will always bring you on your feet, throw you where they like. There hasn't no such case come in my way before. I've seen considerable of what they call ups and downs, and changes and chances, and running into holes and out of them, and jumping among spikes and never stuck by them, and getting into deep water and never drowning; but this beats all. I tell you what it is, you've got something or other, or somebody or other, a looking out for you—a taking care of you. I don't know but I should like, young as you are, just to pin my coat-flaps to yours, and let you go a-head.—Well, I feel better now. What with the supper, and what with your story, I feel a little more settled in my mind; but I've had a hard day of it; you see, I've quit!"

"Quit Mr. Sharps'!"

"Shook my head; swore at them; kicked; closed accounts; slammed the door in their face, and here I am, all afloat. You see, it's been a brewing, a working for some time. Cross looks; worrying for this, and hurrying for that; crusty, snappish orders; squints, whisperings, and all that kind of deviltry. I saw it, but I kept grubbing. It stuck however; stuck right here!" And Mr. Belden gave himself quite a blow on the part designated, which, under the circumstances, must have been done without forethought; he only did a little extra coughing, however. "What brought things to a focus was the miserable breakfast they gave me this morning!—sour bread, sir, muddy coffee, fried holibut. Fish, mind you, ain't flesh; it's sloppy, windy stuff. But sour bread sir, is the—the most unrighteous thing you can put into your stomach. A man, sir, might as well have the—bullets in him. But I forked it down whole, I couldn't bear to taste it. Well, very soon everything began to look green, yellow, blue, black—all colors but the right one! Thinks I, 'I hope they won't go to poking to-day, there'll be murder if they do. Can't stand everything—gripes inside, and kicks outside; must do something; I shall swear, I know I shall—wicked, I know it is, but can't help it; that is, if they come at me!' Well, there was quite a to-do when I got there. Bills ever so many to be made out—all right—soon did that. Then, 'I must go and collect them;' went against the grain—boy's work; but out I went. 'Bank business to be done, money to borrow.' Sent out again. All right. Customers thick, 'must do the writing at night and wait upon the ladies.' Not used to it; but all right still. They poked hard; tried to worry me out, but stood the fire. 'Ding it,' says I, 'I see what you're up to,' but I held in. At last, waiting upon a lady, in comes a great strapping wench, black as Lucifer; Mr. Puffball steps up to me just as I was measuring off some silk; 'just attend to her, will you, I'll measure this.' 'I'll see you'—but no matter where I sent him. I stood stock still, and kept on measuring. He turned purple, but he knew it wouldn't be best to interfere any further; I'd have pitched him under the counter, among the wrapping paper. But there's no use in telling any more. The upshot of it was, I laid it thick on the whole scrape. 'You can go,' says Sharp. 'Going,' says I. Squared accounts

—took my old coat under my arm, and walked off. I'm done, sir, that's the end of it."

"Oh! I am so glad, Mr. Belden."

"You are, eh! Well, I don't know but I ought to feel glad too. But it ain't every one, my good fellow, that can jump out of one berth into another, as you can; and then, you see, the pay stops."

"Oh, but Mr. Belden, I'm glad because I've got a place all ready for you; a capital place; and if you suit, you will have a thousand dollars a year."

"Young man, who *are* you?" and Mr. Belden looked at him with such an air of amazement that Henry was obliged to give way and burst into a fit of laughter.

"Are you one of those fellows that can turn jackstones into guineas? If you are, we'll be quit; because your guineas might go back into jackstones, just when I wanted them the most. None of your tricks."

"I assure you, Mr. Belden, I'm in earnest, and have come to see you for this very purpose. Mr. Blenham wants a first-rate book-keeper. I told him about you; how well you wrote, and how neat you was, and what a steady man you was, and how saving you was too; and all about you; and he said he should like to have just such a person, but he would not attempt to induce you to leave your present place. I told him that I did not believe you would stay there long, from what I heard you say. Well, he said I might see how it was, but that everything must be fair, and above board."

"You can tell him that everything is fair and over board. I'm afloat; ready for a trip anywhere, except back to the old shop—no, no, I've stood it long enough. But do you think I am the man for them? Gentlemen, are they? Know how to treat a fellow that wants to do his work right, and ready night and day to serve them."

"They are gentlemen, indeed. Oh, Mr. Belden, I should be so happy! Only to think—you would, you know, tell me how to do things; and if I was going wrong at any time, why, you could give me a hint, or tell me plainly. And then, only to think of the salary; you will be able in a few years to pay off your mortgage."

The reader must not suppose that Mr. Belden was seated all this while, composedly in his chair, and listening unmoved

to these remarks. He had a great deal to do about the room; walking to and fro; trying the angles, moving the chairs, losing his slippers, and running his hands through his hair. At length, having gone through the various exercises which could be conveniently attended to in a room of no great dimensions, he threw himself into his chair.

"It's well I've had a good hearty supper. Was ever a man—You see, I have been pretty well used, as I told you, to having things go criss-cross, and bottom-side up; I am used to it, and after the blow is over I am all right again; but such things as this happening all in a heep so—rot it. One would think something or somebody or other was watching over *me* too. I'm sure I don't know what I've done—never much good, anyhow. Ain't given to it. I'm surly, snappish, cross-grained—all doubled and twisted up."

"Oh, Mr. Belden, Mr. Belden you forget; you was not snappish nor cross-grained when you talked to me so kindly one night in the store; nor when you came so far out of your way to see me, after I had been turned away by Mr. Sharp; nor when you tried to cheer me up, and offered me money."

"Hold your tongue, sir—drop it—what are you bringing up that for? That wasn't anything; how do you suppose I was going to eat my victuals in peace, or go to bed in peace, knowing that you a poor, lone boy—rot it! don't you say another word about that, that wasn't anything!"

"But it was a great deal, Mr. Belden; you did my heart good—you cheered me—you made me feel that I was not alone; you helped the fatherless, and do you not think that God will remember kindly the heart that feels, and the hand that is open to aid the helpless?"

Mr. Belden is again on his feet, putting his coat on, and feeling for his handkerchief, and goes to clearing off his table.

"I will tell Mr. Blenham then, Mr. Belden, that you will come and see him in the morning."

"Stop, stop, stop; where are you going?" and Mr. Belden caught him by the arm.

"I think I had better go now, sir; you will be along in the morning?"

"That I will, bright and early. But stop; can't I do something for *you?* Don't you want anything? Only to think

of it—you—a stranger too, toughing it along the hardest, hardly knowing where the keeping was to come from, should come here to-night with such an offer to me! There's a kind of Providence in it; that is, if it wasn't me, I should really think it was."

"And why not you, Mr. Belden? Do you not think there is an eye watching over you, and a hand leading you, as well as others? I am sure there is; I know I have asked that many blessings might come upon you."

Mr. Belden did not reply; he merely kept fast hold of Henry's arm, and going with him down stairs, and to the street door, shook him very heartily by the hand, and then went rapidly back to his room, blowing his nose on the way up most pertinaciously.

Henry had not seen Evart since the eventful evening which preceded his dismissal from Messrs. Sharp, Catchem & Co. He rejoiced at what seemed, on the part of his friend, a wiser view of matters, and he had some faint hope, if Evart could be persuaded to break away from his companions, and could be induced to engage in some useful employment, he might yet be saved from ruin. But he had no idea that anything he could say would help to accomplish such a desirable result; and as their intimacy hitherto had only been attended with calamity to himself, he felt afraid of renewing it. His own character was yet to be established; he was only on probation, and his future well-being depended upon his efficiency and correct deportment; and perhaps much of it upon the good will of those who had taken him under such peculiar circumstances. He therefore resolved to attend most strictly to their requests, and to be governed by their advice.

At times, his presence was required most of the evening in the office, but when not necessarily employed there, Mr. Blenham had advised him to spend his time in reading or study.

"Our library is at your service, Henry," said the elder Mr. Blenham to him one day, "and you will find it much for your advantage, as you grow older, to have laid up a good stock of general knowledge from books, as well as a particular acquaintance with the routine of business. Now is your time; you will be more completely occupied in a few years, and have little opportunity for anything but business."

And Henry had taken this advice. He had selected a valuable work on general history, and he had found a French grammar and dictionary, and very much to the gratification of his employers, seemed perfectly satisfied in spending his leisure evenings in this manner.

When Henry parted from his friend Belden, he had made up his mind to stop for a few moments at Evart's. He felt somewhat anxious to ascertain whether the impression which seemed to have been made upon his mind had been strong enough to produce any change in his habits.

As he came to the corner of Broadway and John street, when within a few feet of the former, he recognized Evart in the act of crossing John street, and quickened his step in order to overtake him, but he soon perceived that he was in company with a lady and gentleman. The latter was a tall middle aged man, whom he never remembered to have seen before, and the lady was leaning on his arm, while Evart walked by her side. Was it possible! could it be! and yet, the form, the gait, and a certain consciousness for which he could not have accounted, assured him it must be! Without pausing to reason, he acted almost by instinct, and although they were going up Broadway, in a direction opposite to his place of residence, he turned and followed them.

In a few moments they stopped opposite a large bow window, well lighted up, in which were suspended some fine paintings, and the tall gentleman points the young lady to one of the pictures. Henry has approached quite near, and stands behind some of the other gazers at the sights in the window. He has caught a fair view of her features, he hears her voice, and he almost trembles as its thrilling tones reach his ear. She is speaking to Evart, and Evart seems quite animated and delighted that he can gain her attention to the particular objects of interest he selects for her notice.

Henry has seen enough—too much for his peace. He cannot be mistaken—it was Louise; and she and Evart were known to each other, and on intimate terms. For no consideration would he make himself known, so he stepped away from the little crowd to avoid the possibility of a recognition by either Evart or Louise. Soon they do likewise, and pursue their course up Broadway. Awhile he stands and

watches their progress, until they are lost amid the multitude, and then he turns and retraces his steps towards home. A great change has come over his feelings since the short period of parting with his friend Belden. His joy has been turned into sadness—his fine spirits have fled—his heart droops—a multitude of thoughts crowd upon him. "How had Evart and Louise become acquainted? Why had she come to the city?" Did Evart know of her peculiar situation? and if he did, would that be to Evart an insurmountable obstacle? and had Louise overcome her sensitiveness as to that item in her being? Perhaps the fascination of polite life, and the charm of wealth may have overcome her scruples! She was older now, too, than when he parted from her; many changes might have taken place in her circumstances! Possibly she might have found her parents. The tall gentleman he had seen before, he was sure he had, but when, or where, he could not recall."

That Evart was interested in her, he could not doubt. "Every action manifested it; he was constantly addressing her and trying to catch a glimpse of her face." Alas, poor Henry! He finds that he has been indulging a beautiful vision, which has proved "as a dream when one awaketh." It may not have been in vain that he indulged it; for many a dark and weary hour has been beguiled, and a mighty stimulus it has been to hope and courage. It has vanished now, however, and he must learn to work his way unaided by any of those peculiar hopes which hitherto had made his heart so buoyant.

Nor was this all. Hitherto he had been enabled to exercise generous and noble sentiments. He had been ready to put himself one side from special notice, and seemed even more anxious for the happiness of his friends than for his own. But his heart had never before experienced the same test of its affection. He had loved Evart, but he had never thought of him as being by any possibility a rival. Now the fine qualities which he had gloried in, and boasted as peculiar to Evart, were dimmed to his perception, or affected him most strangely —he did not like to think of them! Every advantage which Evart possessed over himself created an unpleasant sensation. And even his reformation, for which Henry had been so desirous, and for which he had prayed so earnestly, was now—we

almost shudder to record it—not only a matter of indifference, but almost a subject of regret, should it prove to be genuine! Alas, alas! for poor human nature. Henry's self-interest had been touched on a point where he was peculiarly sensitive; and all that is beautiful in his character seemed ready to vanish before the influence of that hateful principle. Happily for him, the feelings which were working forth their unhallowed results, were so black and hideous that their dark shadows began to alarm him. His attention was drawn to them; he fixed his eye in a steady gaze upon their deformity. He looked into the fountain from whose source they had sprung, and then he saw the dark wing of the Evil One hovering over it. As the dove to its covert, when the storm approacheth, so did he fly for refuge to his Great Protector; and with his Bible in his hand, and his heart pouring out supplications to Heaven, he soon found relief; purer feelings began to gain the ascendency; the foul object that had intervened between his heart and his God soon disappeared. He was himself again, and with composure and peace he resigned his will, his destiny, and his heart's strong feelings to his Father in heaven. And thus, with his noble spirit restored to purity, he sank to rest.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Henry had been kindly treated by the family where for a time he had been an inmate, and although their circumstances were limited, and their situation in life did not hold out any expectation of future benefit to him from a continuation of intimacy, he felt an obligation to pay that respect to them which their kindness merited. He had learned thus early in life that the law of love ought not to be confined to any one condition of society, that its beautiful influence stopped not at rank or place, and that mere outward superiority should not alone command either the respect of the heart or the courtesies of life.

Some time had elapsed since he had suddenly left their humble abode, and he feared they might think he had forgotten the promise he made on leaving, "that he would call and see them." He therefore asked and obtained leave to spend an evening in Oliver street.

He was received with great cordiality by both the man and his wife; and they manifested real satisfaction in hearing his recital of all the pleasant things in his new situation.

"I want to ask you," said Mrs. Barton, for that was their name, "if you aint from Stratton? I thought I once heard you say so."

"I am—that is, I lived there some years."

"I want to know! Well, did you ever hear of a person there by the name of Jeralman?—Caroline Jeralman."

"Caroline Jeralman! I did know her—that is, I cannot say that I ever spoke to her, or she to me. She lived some distance from our house. She lived in the woods, by herself. I have seen her, though, often."

"Yes, that's the same. She has seen you, I guess; so she says, or she thinks it must be you are the same. You see I was telling about you. Barton and I often speak about it—I hope it's no offence to say it—but we never had one in our house that tried to give so little trouble and seemed so satis-

fied and contented with everything, and I must say it, knew how to behave like a gentleman."

"You see," said Mr. Barton, "we are plain, hardworking folks, but we know when folks have the right bringing up. I work for a great many different people. Some are real gentlemen; aint afraid to say 'good morning' to a poor man when they meet him, nor to use civil language when they ask him to do a job of work for them. And then there are others that only know him as a poor devil that has to work hard for a living. But I mark them both. There's a deal of difference in folks, I tell you."

"I am sure," said Henry, as soon as he could get a chance to speak, "it gives me great pleasure to hear that you were satisfied with me. I know I have felt that you were very kind and accommodating, and that you did not find fault at my leaving you so suddenly, and without giving you any notice; but I could not help it."

"Oh, we never thought a word about that. We know how hard it is for young men here in the city to get places, and to keep places. It's hard for everybody that has to work for a living. They must watch their chances, and they must put up with the whims and fancies of them that has the means. It aint like the country no way. But I have got clear off from what I was going to say, and that was about Caroline. As I was saying, Barton and I was talking one evening about you; and Caroline heard me speak the name, and says she, 'I wonder if he was from Stratton?' Says I, 'I don't know for certain, but I think I heard him say he was from there, or he'd been there, or something of that kind;' and then she made me tell her about what kind of a person you was, and how you looked; and says she, 'I guess it's him, and do you know where he lives or where I could find him?' 'I don't,' says I; and then I asked Barton and he didn't know; but says he, 'The young man will be here to see us one of these days, and I'll ask him.'"

"Did she want to see me?"

"She did, you may depend on it; but what she wanted she didn't say. She aint much given to talking, and she always seems to like to keep things to herself."

"I cannot think why she should want to see me. As I have said, I never spoke to her."

"Well, I don't know, but some how I got the idea from some things she said, that you probably knew some one that she did, and could tell her where to find them. She didn't say just these words, but I took that to be her meaning."

"You see," said Mr. Barton, "she's an odd fish."

"Oh, well, but Barton, if she is a little odd, we never see any wrong in her. She's kind-hearted, and she's willing to work; and she's ready to help in sickness or anything; and she pays her own way; and I always pity her, because she don't take the world easy; she gets so down-spirited at times, and says "she wishes she had never been born," and all that. Now a person that feels so must feel pretty bad. I've seen hard times, but I never could say that."

"You see my wife is a very tender-hearted woman, and she thinks well of most everybody. All right, I know, but I don't mean to say by that that Caroline has anything bad about her, I don't say that; but I've tell'd my wife many times, that it did seem to me, 'there must be fire somewhere when there was so much smoke.' Now it aint natural for one to be having such low, dumpish feelings if there aint no cause for it. But, as I said, she's an odd fish; I can't make her out; but I have my opinion."

"Oh, Barton, you hadn't ought to be harboring them old feelings when you don't know nothing; it's only guess work."

"May be it is, but you can't get it out of me wife; it's there, and it will stick there; but I aint agoing to dispute about it; we aint nothing to do with it, and we never had; I always treat her civiiiy, and I always will; but she's an onsteady kind of a person, going here and there, and never settling down nowhere."

"Well, may be she has a reason for it."

"Maybe she has; may be she had a reason for sitting on our stoop all night; you remember that, maybe, wife?"

"Do, la, Barton, if you aint got such a memory! I wonder if you lay up all I've ever done!"

"Yes, I do; I lay it up pretty close; I lay it up how you've worked and worried yourself to help me along, and how kind and good-natured you've been, and how snug you've always kept things."

"Do stop, now, I wasn't meaning any such thing."

"I know you wasn't; but I was, you see."

"Now, Barton, since you've said what you know about Caroline, just up and tell the whole, because this young gentleman, maybe, will take the idea that there is something dreadful in it."

"I don't know what there was in it, and I don't care to know—yes I do, too, for I should like to have some things straightened in my mind; but as to telling over the whole story I don't feel like it. You know as much about it as I do, and are more used to telling long stories, and so you may tell it if you like."

"But you saw her first in the morning."

"I know that, and a plaguy start she gave me. But I shan't go on with the story no how; you tell it your own way; if I should tell it, maybe I should be putting in my 'opinions,' as you call them, and then you'd take me to-do."

"Well, I don't know as the young gentleman would care to hear about it; but, as we've said so much about Caroline, he maybe might be thinking there was more in it than there is. It's a good many years—more than twelve years ago"——

"Yes, more than fifteen."

"Oh, Barton, aint you mistaken?"

"Not a bit. Wasn't it when we lived t'other side of Broadway? and didn't we move from there in 18—? and wasn't it the summer before we moved to this side of the town?"

"You are right, so it was; how time does slip along; who would have thought it?—yes, it was all of fifteen years ago, and most sixteen, I guess, one morning, very early—Barton always gets up early, long before day, to go out and feed his horse and cow—we kept a cow then, just as we do now—and as he opened the door, with the lantern in his hand, he came nigh tumbling over a girl that was sitting down flat on the steps."

"It made me start, I tell you."

"Says he, 'good woman, what do you want?' with that she rose up, and he saw by the lantern that she was quite young, and had a very mild, pleasant face; she had been crying, and, when she tried to speak, she began to cry again. 'Come in,' says he, 'come in;' and with that he up and calls me—'Ma,' said he, 'come here"—he called me ma in those days—so up

I jumps and came out. 'What is it?' says I. 'Oh, Ma'am,' says she, 'don't be displeased with me; I'm a poor lone girl, that has come to town to look for a place, and I've walked all the way, and got in late at night, and didn't know where to go; and as I came down this street I see the gateway here,' —our house, you see, stood a little back in the yard, and there was a high board fence in front, and the gate was made of slats so you could see through it—'and then,' says she, 'I tried the gate, for I thought if I could only get out of the way somewhere it would be better for me than sitting on the steps of houses in the street all night; and I found the gate wasn't fastened, and so I ventured to take the liberty and come and set on your stoop.' 'Poor thing!' says I; 'why didn't you rap at the door?' 'Oh,' says she, 'I knew I wasn't in the country, and that people here wasn't used to let strangers in at night; but if you won't take offence at what I've done, I will thank you much, and as soon as it's light enough to be stirring I will be on my way.' 'No, you won't,' says I, 'not till you've had some rest and a good breakfast;' and with that she went to crying again, and I cried too, and I guess Barton felt bad, for he went off just as if he'd been shot, to feed the critters."

"Well, you see, I was younger then than I be now, and hadn't seen so much of the deviltry of men and women too. I did feel bad; I vow I did; but I knew wife would take good care of her, and I cleared out; but tell the rest on it."

"Oh, well, I have told all that is of any consequence. That was the first of our seeing Caroline, and she has always remembered it, and she likes to come here, and many a good turn she has done for me since."

"Now, wife, I say, that aint the end of the story, no how. Tell about the baby; tell the whole on it, or I will."

"Oh, well, I'll tell what happened just to please you; but you musn't go to making the young gentleman think it had anything to do with her coming to our house. You see, we always sold milk, just as we do now, to the neighbors round; well, we had got through our breakfast, it was beginning to be a little light, and the girl of a family that lived right opposite to us came running in for the milk—'Oh, Mrs. Barton,' says she, 'only to think there's another baby left down in our area, the dearest, sweetest little thing; do come and

see it.' Barton had just drove off, so I gets the milk and over I goes; and of all sights I ever beheld, that baby beat; its cheeks was so rosy, and its little black hair all of a curl. 'Oh,' said I, 'the wicked parent that has turned off this blessed babe ought to be hung.' With that the captain he came, and he was clean took with it, and says he to the lady, 'I'll take that baby if you will find a person to tend it and take care of it.' Says she, 'I'll take charge of it myself, if you will hire a girl to tend it.' 'Done!' said he. And then I turns to Caroline, and says I, 'here might be a place for you; shall I speak for you?' 'Yes,' said she, 'I wish you would, for I dearly love to tend children.' And so I got the place for her, and there she stayed a good many years, and the old folks are living near and they'll tell the same story."

Mr. Barton looked at Henry.

"Queer story, I call that!"

Henry did not reply; there were some things about it that set his thoughts in commotion; so Mrs. Barton replied for him:

"I don't believe the young gentleman thinks there is anything queer about it, or out of the way; such things are very common."

"It's queer, for all that."

"Mrs. Barton," said Henry, "what was the name of the gentleman who adopted the child?"

"Lovelace—Captain Lovelace. A fine man—rich too; and I've heard it said that he's dead, and that he'd left all his property to that child; but whether it is true, or whether he's living, or she's living, we don't know."

Henry asked again—"Does Caroline live near by?"

"Only a few doors off; she is in here, though, 'most every day. You see, she takes in sewing from the shops, and I guess she makes a decent living; she always seems to have enough to do with; she pays her board regular, and everything looks snug about her; but what makes her so downhearted there's no telling."

"There's guessing, though."

"Now Barton, stop; you don't know, and can't say."

"I can't help thinking, and I always have been thinking; as I said at first, smoke comes because there's fire somewhere. If she hadn't something to do with that"——

"Now Barton, hush; it's wicked in you."

"Can't help it."

"Mrs. Barton," said Henry, rising and handing a slip of paper to her, "if Caroline should want to see me, I am to be found at that number in Pearl street," and thanking them for all their kindness, he took his leave.

The recital to which Henry had been listening was indeed to him a matter of deep interest. That he had learned the particular history of Louise, he had no doubt; hitherto he had only known the bare fact, as she herself had related it. That there had ever been any connection in her history with Caroline Jeralman, was entirely new to him; and the hints which were thrown out by Mr. Barton, did not tend to enlighten him very pleasantly. For what, too, should Caroline wish to see *him?* He should be glad to know. And he should be glad to have an interview with her. His curiosity was greatly excited. What if, in some way, he should be the means of discovering for Louise the great secret of her parentage! But if that discovery should only confirm her worst fears, of what avail would it be to her, or to him?

These conflicting emotions beguiled him through his long walk; but that the conclusions at which he arrived were agreeable, we cannot pretend to say. At his age the romance of life has great power. The conventionalities of the social system are not justly estimated; they are rather looked upon as arbitrary—sometimes oppressive. "What right have they to disturb the peace of two loving hearts? What has rank or station in life, or even parentage, to do with love? He could take his Louise, and never for one moment allow a thought beyond her own dear self to trouble him or her. His parents were in the grave, and hers unknown; and why not let it thus be? Could they not be all the world to each other?" But what if another heart had won her confidence and love? "He would even then care for her—be ready to serve her; and if she could be more happy with Evart, so let it be. He would love Evart too!" Very noble and generous thoughts, these—much better than Henry had sometimes indulged.

Mr. Belden was still in the office when Henry returned; he had finished his labors for the day, and was amusing himself with an evening paper. Mr. Belden's appearance had

altered much for the better, since he had acquired his new situation. He kept himself much more trim; his hair had none of that wild, tangled look, as when he sat perched up by himself in his cupboard at Messrs. Sharp, Catchem & Co.'s; it lay quite smooth and orderly. The old green coat, too, was laid aside, and his whole exterior, even to the matter of shaving and linen, was punctiliously attended to. It was very evident that Mr. Belden felt himself to be in a different atmosphere—one more healthful and invigorating, and where appearance and manners of the gentleman seemed in place.

Mr. Belden laid aside his paper as Henry entered, fixing his eye steadily upon him for a moment.

"Where been?"

"I have been to make a call on the good people in Oliver street. They treated me so kindly when I lived there, I thought I must go and see them."

"All right—stick to old friends, I say, black or white, cartmen, washerwomen, milkmen, or hod-carriers! You are a queer fellow about friends, though—seem to have some of all sorts—been two here to-night."

"Two! Who were they, Mr. Belden?"

"Don't look so wild and frightened. Patience, man; I'll tell you directly. Take one at a time. First of all comes in a tall, spruce gentlemanly fellow; smooth face—shiny, good large mouth, square chin; looks round a moment, and Mr. Blenham, junior, jumps up. 'How are you, Harry?' 'How are you, James?'—both speaking at once, and then there was a great to do with shaking hands, and all that sort of thing. That over, chairs placed to sit down. 'Can't—can't stop a moment—family expecting him,' and so on; 'only called to inquire for a young man whom he accidentally learned lived there—Henry Thornton.' All right. 'Is he in?' 'Asked permission to go out this evening' I tell you what, young man, it took a load off my shoulders to hear that 'asked permission.' Don't you never stir finger or foot in this place without permission. You've got, by some hocus-pocus or other, into one of the most—most desirable situations in this city, and you've got me here too: be careful; feel as if there were eggs laying all about you—you might break 'em. Well, to go on with the story. 'Sorry,' said the gent, 'not to see him. Please give him this card, and when you can spare him some

evening, ask him to give me a call.' 'Certainly.' All right—shake hands again—gent walks off. Blenham, junior, hands me the card. 'Mr. Belden, please give this to Henry, and say to him, that any evening when you can spare him, he can make the call."

And stepping to the desk, Mr. Belden caught up the card and handed it to the bewildered youth.

"James Vernon, Walker street. Who can it be, Mr. Belden? I do not know any such person."

"Don't ask me; but for—for all that's lucky go and see him; there's no telling what will come of it. Maybe you'll be whipped off and made president of a bank; it wouldn't be any more surprising than to be kicked out of Sharp & Catchem's as we've been and land here. That's the end of that chapter. You've got the card—all right. Now we'll begin the second lesson."

"Another rap at the office door. Mr. Blenham Junor gone off all alone this trip. 'Come in.' My eyes! If my hair didn't most rise up. In walks the young chap you shook hands with one day at Sharp & Catchem's, and who caused you all that rumpus. Thinks I, 'my young fellow, you've come into the wrong shop; but I'm glad you're come *now*, Joe Belden will be ready for you.' 'Is Henry Thornton in?' 'He is not, sir.' 'In soon?' 'Can't say.' 'I'm sorry.' 'I ain't,' says I; but I said it to myself. Looked at the chair, as if he wished to sit down. 'You don't do it,' thinks I, with my leave. 'Is this Mr. Blenham?' 'Not exactly,' says I; 'another kind of a man.' Only to think! Never taken for principal at Sharp & Catchem's. 'Be kind enough to deliver a message to Henry Thornton?' 'Depends upon what kind of a message it is.' 'Very anxious to see Mr. Thornton; please ask him to call at my house, Mr. Marston, Cortlandt street, or if he will let me know when he can see me here, will be happy to call on him.' Thinks I, 'that's most too bad; you've ousted him out of one place, and like to have been the ruin of him, and now when he is all fair and square, in good quarters, you're after him again; but you won't get him if Joe Belden can hold on to his coat-flaps.'"

"Oh, but Mr. Belden!"

"Hold your tongue, sir." Says I, 'Young gentleman,' I spoke civil, though I felt gritty, 'a young man in this city,

who has to look out for his own fodder, and no friends to do for him, and nothing under the blue sky to depend upon but his fair character, and his correct deportment, has to be pretty shy what company he keeps.'"

"Oh, Mr. Belden!"

"Hold your tongue, I say, hear me through. With that he colored, dark red, I tell you. Thinks I, 'the fire's kindled, the spark is struck; look out for blazes.' He trembled about the lips a little, I see, and kept swallowing. 'Bitter; ain't it,' thinks I. 'You are a stranger to me, sir.' Said he, 'but I believe, from what you say, that you are a friend of Henry Thornton.' 'I am,' said I, 'body and soul—reason to be—he's a noble young fellow, too good to be spoiled.'"

"Oh, Mr. Belden! why"——

"Hold your tongue, I tell you, and hear me through, and then jabber away as much as you please. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'I am glad he has a friend fearless enough to step before him as a guard against any that might injure him. I have not been aware before a few hours since, that it was in consequence of my improper conduct that he lost his place; and I assure you, sir, it gave me exquisite pain until I learned through the same source that he had obtained a much better situation.' 'Fact,' says I, 'fact; no doubt of that; but how he got it, you see, is all whimble-whamble to me, beyond my comprehension.' 'I expect,' says he, 'Henry serves one who has his eye upon the stranger and the fatherless.'"

"Did he say so, Mr. Belden—oh!"

"Drat it! hush; you keep a talking so!" and Mr. Belden had to use his handkerchief, and move round a little before he could go on again. 'Tell Henry for me,' said he, 'that old things have passed away, and I hope'—rot it! stop looking so"——

Henry was not only looking but trying to dry away the big tears which had started as by electricity when these words were spoken.

"How do you think a fellow can go on with his story and you blubbering all the time. You see, I've been in boiling hot water to-night, and cooled off rather the quickest, till I'm all like a jelly—can't stand alone; no chance to be mad, nor to kick, nor do nothing; hard up now."

"I'm so happy to hear him speak so."

"You are, eh? Well, hear the rest, then. 'Tell Henry for me, that I wish to see him, that I may thank him for the good he has done me; and I think I can convince him'—— rot it! stop now; 'convince him that he has saved his friend from ruin. And will you be so good, sir, as to hand him this account; tell him I knew not until to-day that it was unsettled. And also this bill for twenty dollars, and tell him that too had slipped my mind.' 'Glad—glad,' said I, 'happy to do so.' 'And here is a small article I wish to return to him; but with your leave I will inclose it in some paper; it is more valuable than that bank-note one hundred times over—at least it has been so to me.' 'Happy to accommodate;' handed the paper, folded carefully; 'all right.' 'Good evening, sir.' 'Stop,' says I, 'a word to say: suppose I spoke hasty.' 'Not at all, not at all; you have proved yourself to be a good friend to Henry, and I rejoice that he has such a one so near him.' 'No offence taken then?' 'Not in the least, sir, but should be very happy to be further acquainted; good evening, sir.' 'Not yet—hold on,' said I: 'about that thing you folded up so carefully—curious to see it—secret?' 'Oh, no; open it by all means; read it, and may God bless it to you, as I hope he has to me'—— Broke all down at that corner; couldn't go no further; all wound up; tears in his eyes; lips shaky. A good squeeze of the hand—he was off. There, that's all; rot it, what ails you?"

Mr. Belden had better have asked what ailed himself, for by rehearsing the scene, feelings were aroused that had been previously much excited, and he had to stammer and sputter and work himself into all shapes to get through the story.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Evart had become now quite a constant visitor at Mr. Vernon's, and he found the void occasioned by the loss of his former companions more than filled by the agreeable entertainment in the family circle of that gentleman. He had put himself under an instructor in the classics and in French, and was also pursuing a regular course of historical reading. Mr. Vernon had also expressed the opinion, that in the course of a year or two a journey through Europe, under the direction of some judicious person as travelling companion, would be very desirable, before settling down to any regular business. And Evart cordially approved of such a plan, and was applying himself with great diligence to his various studies, no doubt stimulated by the pleasant prospect ahead. And this was one important object Mr. Vernon had in view when he gave such advice. He knew how necessary it was for the youthful mind to have some alluring object before it, to be accomplished by present application; and especially he knew this to be true in Evart's case. The mere making of money could of itself be no very strong motive for labor with one who had enough already; and he had received no early training calculated to create a taste for study or improvement for its own sake. If his mind could be stimulated, by some attractive object ahead, to present application, he had no doubt a habit would not only be formed, itself of great value, but a taste acquired that would in time accomplish all that was necessary.

Evart was now in the critical pass between youth and manhood—a transition state in which there is much unrest. And while crude notions of what would be for their best good are entertained, these seem very important, and must by all means be carried out. This dangerous spot in his life safely passed, Mr. Vernon well knew that maturer judgment and clearer views would enable the young man to decide more understandingly as to his life's business.

Neither had this good friend lost sight of the one great

subject about which we have seen he gave him a gentle hint. It was not his way to obtrude religious teaching under any circumstances, but watched his opportunity to drop a word or thought in apparently an accidental way. He preferred to allow the great subject to come along naturally, and to be sought after by the young inquirer, rather than to be forward in prying into their sacred feelings. Evart never was apprehensive of being catechised when alone with Mr. Vernon, and therefore felt no restraint. And whenever he asked a question having relation to such a delicate matter, he knew it would lead to nothing further than a clear and definite reply; he would not be put through a course of questions in reference to those feelings which seemed to him too sacred to be revealed to any human ear.

Well would it be if all who have a desire to be useful, and constitute themselves spiritual advisers of others, whether clergymen or laymen, had a little more delicacy of feeling and a little more common sense in their dealings with those into whose minds the holy light is beginning to beam. Man often mars but seldom aids the mighty work. Much too often some system of doctrines, too deep for even an angel's comprehension, is brought to bear upon the tender conscience. "This is the path; up these gradings you must go, or be lost!" "To this dogma you must assent, no matter if it brings a forbidding cloud before the face of Him you are feeling after; to such a state of mind you must arrive, or presume not to hope." Blind leaders are such, with little knowledge of the word of God, using it only as a text-book in which to find passages that may sustain their theories, or from whence to select a heading for their sermons; and with a stock of general knowledge too scanty to give them ease in the society of even men of common reading, they go forth from the schools where they have been helped to stumble along through their two years' course, and are palmed upon the world as ministers of Christ.

Mr. Vernon had not learned his religion from the books. The Bible was his alpha and omega in all that concerned his relation to God. From its blessed pages he had drawn all the consolation which his spirit enjoyed. On the infinite atonement there revealed he rested his hope; its freeness and fullness he could portray in its own burning language, and

he knew just where to point the inquiring mind for light and peace.

As Evart had asked instruction, it had been given him; a little at a time. And his inquiries gave Mr. Vernon reason to believe that he was being influenced by a divine agency; that his young heart was turning its affections towards his great unseen Friend. It gave him great joy, but he made no communication on the subject to any human being, nor did he let Evart know what he himself believed. He well knew, if Evart was a subject of divine grace, light would break in upon him: perhaps by no sudden flash, but like the coming morn, faint streaks at first, but "brighter and brighter to the perfect day."

He was not anxious either that his young friend should be filled with ecstatic joy, but rather pointed him to the great duties to be performed, to the spirituality of God's commands, and to the necessity of cultivating the Christian graces. Peace would naturally follow such a course, and it would be a peace not easily disturbed. He knew that a youth situated as Evart was, with wealth at his command, and, as a natural consequence, thrown among a class where he would find few of his own age to encourage him by their sympathies in a religious course, he would need to be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of piety, and have his principles of action based upon a foundation strong and enduring. And such a character, without a miracle, could not be formed in a day; like all great works, it would need time and careful nurture.

Evart had broken from his former associates, to all intents and purposes, although friendly salutations always passed between them when they met. He no longer visited their haunts of pleasure. His fast horse had been disposed of, and Evart himself was no more seen mingling with the furious drivers on the road to Cato's. He chose more quiet avenues for the occasional rides he took with his mother or sister, and seemed to enjoy, as they had never remarked before, the beautiful scenery of their lovely island. And as the winter had passed, and the spring in its beauty was bursting forth, he was particularly partial to these rides at the early morning. There was no languor in body or mind, now, when he awoke from his night's repose. Fresh as the new day were

his feelings, and every ray from nature kindled a joy within. A sweet harmony was established between his heart and the world which God had made. He knew not how it had come about, and perhaps thought not that change in him had been the cause; he only wondered why he had never before taken delight in the fields and the flowers, the hills, and rocks, and valleys, the sparkling rivers and the changing sky.

Mrs. Marston had noticed, with some satisfaction, that Evart had become more regular in his habits; his place was never empty at the table, nor was his chair vacant in the evening circle, except for a visit to Mr. Vernon's. Why he seemed so fond now of the society of that gentleman, she did not know; but she felt that perhaps it was as well for him to be on intimate terms with one of so stable a character and so generally respected. Mrs. Marston, though, did not fancy altogether this exclusiveness; there were some things which did not, to her, appear quite natural. His former associates seldom called upon him, and Evart had evidently lost all relish for their society; he had also abstained from theatrical amusements, and although she had herself, of late years, but seldom partaken of them, it appeared to her very unusual for a young man like Evart to lose all desire that way; and although she many times had fears lest he was going too far and too fast in his pursuit of pleasure, and often had said she wished he might be more at home, and more disposed to some kind of business, yet that he should make so *great* a change, and confine himself so assiduously to his studies, was a little further in the right direction than she really thought was best. The good lady did not want her son to be ruined; but she was willing to have him go to the very edge of the precipice, and trust to chance that he might not slip off.

Seeing how matters were going, and fearful lest his youthful spirits might be endangered by too strict a course of daily duties, the good mother, much to the surprise of Evart, came one day into his room, and proposed that he should go and buy tickets for them for the evening.

"It seems to me," said she, "as if I should like to hear Cooper once more."

Evart was indeed surprised, for he thought his mother, long since, had lost all relish for such scenes; and perhaps he manifested his feelings in the look he gave her, for she at once said—

"You have no objections, I suppose, Evart, to wait upon me there?"

"Oh, by no means, mamma; I will go, certainly, and purchase tickets."

"And do you not think, Evart, it would be better for you to wait upon Ellen to the publics, than to allow her to depend upon other young gentlemen?"

"By all means, mamma; I *have* waited upon her, and am perfectly willing to do so."

"I know you have; but some one has told her—I know not who, except it be Tom Lovell—that you have become so strict about such matters that you thought them wrong, and therefore she has accepted Tom's invitation for to-morrow evening, because she did not wish you to go against your will. And, she says, the last public you attended with her, you scarcely danced all the evening, and only when you were fairly forced into it."

Evart was conscious that this was true; but he had not supposed it had been noticed.

"It may have been true, mamma, that I manifested an unwillingness to dance that evening; I remember, I did not feel much in the humor for it; but I certainly regret that Ellen has felt it necessary, on that account, to allow Tom Lovell to take my place. Indeed, mamma, he is not one that I wish her to accept such attentions from."

"Oh, well, I suppose Tom is as good as most of the young men, Evart; he is young yet, you know, and may be a little wild; but he has a very good heart, and he is so good-natured and civil! Young folks cannot be expected to be always sober as old people; it is not natural. If there is nothing bad about them, a little frolic, once in a while, is no more than must be looked for."

Evart, however, had reason to fear that the case of his old friend, Tom Lovell, had been placed in rather too fair a light. He feared Tom had no regard to any moral principles, and would, before many years, be a confirmed debauchee; and he was much concerned that his sister should have taken such a step without consulting him. It was too late, now, to reverse the matter.

"I shall certainly, mamma, not allow Ellen to be waited upon *alone* by Lovell: I shall accompany them. If she chooses to dance with him, of course I cannot help that."

"Of course not! How could you, Evart? Why should you? Tom Lovell is certainly a young gentleman, of as good family as our own, and he stands as fair, for aught I know, as any young man of his age, I really fear, Evart, that in some way, you are getting very strange notions. I do not know who has put them there. If it is Henry Thornton, I shall almost regret that we invited him to stay here."

"My dear mamma, whatever you regret in reference to me, never, I beg of you, regret that Henry has been an inmate of our family; he has brought a blessing with him; he has been the means, I frankly allow, and shall ever remember it to my dying day—of opening my eyes to see the danger of the road I was travelling, and of showing me a better, a safer, a happier path. His friendship I prize now as I have never before, because I did not know before what it was to have a true friend. To have one who, at the risk of his own good name, would interpose between me and harm, and at the same time feared not to tell me of my faults, in such a way that I could see them without reproaching him as a censor; but never one word has he spoken against a companion of mine. He is above all such littleness; his principles, I know, are based upon rules that come from heaven. He has saved your Evart, dear mamma, from dangers you knew not I was exposed to."

Mrs. Marston was not prepared for this. "What had happened? Was Evart in his right mind?" But he appeared perfectly self-possessed; the tones of his voice were mild, and his manner respectful and affectionate, much more so than ever before; she almost resolved to relinquish her plan of visiting the theatre; but having expressed the wish, she would not just then recall her words. At present she did not feel like continuing the subject they had been upon, and, after a few remarks upon some family matters, she retired, and Evart being left to his own reflections, his mind at once reverted to what had been mentioned respecting Lovell and his sister Ellen.

He had never before thought much of Tom's attendance upon his sister, being so intimate in their family relations, his own boon companion, and Ellen yet so young! But now he wondered that he had never before considered seriously of this matter. Surely he was not conscious of any want of

affection for her; why then had he been so indifferent as to the character of those who waited upon her? How could he bear to see his fair sister, pure as the morning air, in close contact with one who regarded female virtue as of little worth, and whom, he had every reason to believe, even from his own confession, had no scruples in mingling with those who had no character to lose. He had never thought of this before! What an outrage it seemed to him that such persons should dare to thrust themselves into circles where lovely females congregate, and where their rank as gentlemen gave them the privilege of asking in the dance any whom they might fancy.

But Evart was yet a tyro in the affairs of life. He was yet free from any gross stain—his heart unsoiled; he had indulged in gaiety, but never had ventured within the vortex of pollution, and he now shrank with horror, as he looked back and saw how very near he had been to the deceitful waters. "But his sister! How could he permit her to mingle with those whom he felt were not safe companions for himself?"

These thoughts troubled him awhile; he knew not that he could place things in a right position, but he resolved to be more careful for the future, that she who had a right to his attentions should never feel compelled to look beyond her brother, in all matters where a gentleman's presence or aid was required, and with this feeling he at once arose and prepared to go out in order to purchase the tickets for the evening, as his mother had requested.

On his way up town he met his friend Mr. Vernon.

"Good morning Evart—going to my house?"

"I should probably have called there before I returned, but am on my way to purchase some tickets for the theatre this evening."

"Feel like going—do you?"

"I cannot say that I do feel much inclined; indeed, I would rather not go if I could well avoid it. But mamma has expressed a wish to hear Cooper this evening, and of course I must accompany her."

"Of course! All right."

"But *do* you think it all right, Mr. Vernon?"

"Most certainly! for I understand you to say that you are going at the request of your mother—go, by all means,

and if you have time call upon me to-morrow evening, and let me know how you enjoyed yourself."

"I will, sir."

And as they separated, Evart could not but think that Mr. Vernon was, certainly, a very singular man, for he remembered conversations they had held together on the subject of theatres, and that gentleman had, in plain terms, denounced them, and he certainly never visited them himself; perhaps he would explain the matter on the morrow.

According to his promise, Evart called, and almost the first question Mr. Vernon asked was—

"Well, Evart, how did you enjoy yourself last evening?"

"I cannot say that I enjoyed myself at all, sir."

"What was the difficulty?"

"Oh, well, sir, I cannot say certainly what it was; but it seemed to me a foolish business altogether. At times there were scenes in Cooper's part, that would absorb my interest; but there was so much in the whole affair that seemed to me unnatural, both in speaking and acting, besides some things that shocked me. Knowing as I do, the character of the individuals, to hear them use the most sacred words in mock earnestness, was painful in the extreme. I heartily rejoiced to hear mamma say to me 'we will not stay to hear the farce,' and was glad when we got away from the atmosphere of the place."

"And yet you have been rather fond of going there!"

"I know I have, but wonder now how I could ever have been pleased with the silly thing!"

"You have told me, Evart, just what I expected to hear, and I am very glad that thus it is; you view things now through a very different medium from what you once did, and you will be more and more surprised, as you find not only the doings of men presenting a new aspect to you, but also the works of God. A new world is opening to you, my dear Evart; old things are passing away—a brighter, happier, purer world! Do you not begin yourself to think so?"

Evart could not reply—he *had* begun to feel the influence of a new life. At times, bright gleams would shoot across his mind; light streaks from an unseen world would irradiate some part of his horizon, and the fountain within would at

once throw up joyous sparkles, and the tears of gladness burst forth. He had not at the time, thought much of them, nor searched into their source; but now, as Mr. Vernon spoke, they all came to his remembrance, and his heart was filled. He knew there was a change, and that he was happier than he had ever been before, but as he tried to respond to his friend, words failed him.

Mr. Vernon understood the meaning of his silence, and to relieve him, reverted to the subject of theatrical exhibitions.

"You, no doubt, thought somewhat strange of my reply to you yesterday, when you asked me 'whether I thought it right for you to go?' and I will now explain myself. You know my opinion about such matters, as you and I have been over the ground before. Theatres *do* exist, and probably will, until the world shall be in a very different state from what it now is. They are the most attractive, and, under certain circumstances, the most dangerous places that a young man can visit. They do literally lie near to the gates of death, and from them the path leads straight to hell! And you well know to what I allude when I speak of them thus."

"I do, sir."

"The mere representations on the stage may, or may not, be harmless. To me, in general, they are very insipid, or they were, for it is a long time since I have witnessed them. I know, for you told me so, that you were to accompany your mother; you could, therefore, be utterly removed from all those attachments extraneous to the mere play, to which I have just alluded, and I was quite willing, under such circumstances, to have you look at what you once admired: feeling quite sure, from what I knew of you, that you would be affected by them as you have. Another reason was, that you were obeying a request of your mother."

"Yes, sir; nothing else would have induced me to go."

"And you made no objections?"

"None in the least, sir."

"That was right. Obey and yield promptly, cheerfully, at all times. That is a positive command; and when we venture to resist, we must be very sure that our reasons for doing so are as clear as that precept. Your mother will not, doubtless, wish to visit such scenes often, nor do I think she would be apt to command you to do anything positively wrong; al-

though she may not look upon many things as dangerous which you know to be such. I have known cases where children seemed to feel that the new relation in which they are placed to God absolved them from that most sacred tie, the parental bond, and seemed to forget, that the only true evidence they could have that any good change had passed upon them at all, was a more perfect desire to keep all the commandments of God. One idea more, my dear Evart, and I have done; but I fear I shall weary you with my long talk."

"You need not fear that, Mr. Vernon; do let me hear it."

"Well, it is this: '*A Christian is a light shining in a dark place.*' You can think of that, matter, and when we see one another again, let me know what you make of it. I have a special motive in wishing you to study it; you are very peculiarly situated, and will need well digested views of what is to be expected of you, and of what may be right for you under certain circumstances; and I think that idea, followed out and well impressed upon the mind in all its bearings, will help you materially. But now to another subject. Have you seen your friend Thornton yet?"

"I have not; I called there after I had seen you and given you the information I had received concerning him, but he was not in."

"I called there too. Blenham, the younger brother, is an intimate friend of mine, and from what you have told me of that young man, I was very anxious to see him, and although I told you to invite him here, I thought perhaps a personal invitation from me might be more sure to bring him, as you say he is very diffident; but I failed in seeing him likewise. I left my card, though, and Mr. Blenham desired his book-keeper to say to Henry that he might call upon me any evening he could be spared. He will, no doubt, wonder who I am, and what I can be wanting of him."

As Mr. Vernon finished this sentence, the street-door bell rang, and in a few minutes the servant entered and handed Mr. Vernon a card; it was the one he had left for Henry.

"He has come," said Mr. Vernon, looking at Evart. "Ask the young gentleman in, James."

But before the servant had time to deliver the message, Evart was in the hall, and literally the two friends ran to each other's arms; they had a great deal to say, but there was no

time then, nor had either very much command of his feelings. Under the circumstances, words were not the vehicle through which feelings could be conveyed. At length Evart exclaimed, with much emotion—

"Oh, Henry, how I have wanted to see you!"

Henry could not reply; his feelings were even more acute than those of Evart, so he suffered his friend to lead him in silence through the hall towards the library, in which apartment Mr. Vernon and Evart had been sitting. As they passed the circular stairway in the centre of the hall, a young lady was just descending its last step. Evart bowed to her, and was passing along, thinking a better opportunity would be afforded for introducing his friend in the family circle of the parlor. Henry, however, paused and looked intently at her, and the lady, under a like impulse, turned and fixed her eye upon him. She must have been a little in doubt as to the propriety of the act, or whether she had not mistaken the features; for the color mantled her cheeks, and there was evident confusion in her manner. Evart was surprised at this movement on the part of each, and was about to make a formal introduction of the parties, when the lady spoke.

"Can I be mistaken? Is not this Henry Thornton?"

Henry advanced, and their hands were clasped in a warm embrace. He spoke her name at the same time, but in scarcely an audible voice.

"I thought I could not be mistaken, and yet you have altered so, that my heart misgave me for a moment."

"And you have changed too, Miss Louise; we have both grown more than we are ourselves conscious of; but your countenance is the same, or at least I think so."

There was something in the manner of Henry that struck a chill to the heart of Louise. She had met him with much warmth; she had not even waited for any advancement on his part. She was still Louise; above all disguise, and unused to control her feelings where she did not think there was an imperious call for so doing. He had indeed grasped her hand cordially—perhaps too much so, as an act of politeness; but his words seemed cold, and came forth, she thought, in too measured a manner; and then, "Miss Louise;" when they parted, a very different attachment was added to her name. All this rushed through her mind in an instant.

Perhaps she felt a little mortified, too, that one should have been present and witnessed her ardor, whom she knew was well versed in all that etiquette of city life to which she had not been educated, or rather which she had not seen fit to cultivate. But she must say something in reply to Henry's remark.

"I expect I have grown some, but I am not apt to think of that, perhaps not enough. Shall we see you in the parlor?" and she courtesied to him in quite a formal manner, as she turned to go. Henry looked at Evart for a reply.

"Oh, certainly, certainly, Miss Lovelace."

Evart had been too confounded by the sudden and unexpected scene to do aught but look on. The whole thing, however, occupied but a few moments, and no opportunity was afforded him to speak, if there had been any occasion for it. Nothing was said but what has been recorded, yet feelings were set to work in the breasts of each party that were, upon the whole, not very agreeable.

"And this is Henry Thornton!" said Mr. Vernon, as he rose to meet the young man.

"And my friend, Mr. Vernon," said Evart.

"That is a word which comprehends a great deal, I can tell you, young gentlemen—a sacred word; but often sadly abused. But do not be alarmed, either of you. I am not going to deliver a homily on friendship. I am very happy to see you, Mr. Thornton."

"Oh, Mr. Vernon, call him Henry. You call me Evart, you know."

"Shall I? But he is taller than you, Evart, and I know not but he is older. It would not indeed be very difficult for me, if pleasing to him." And turning to Henry—"Your friend here has had your name over so often, that it has become quite a household word between him and myself."

"I should feel it quite a privilege, sir, to be thus familiarly addressed."

"Then Henry it shall be. Come, take a seat, and after we have chatted a while, and become a little acquainted with each other, we will adjourn to the parlor."

But this event did not take place for some time. There were many things to be revealed to each which the other wished to know. Henry had to go over with his experience

since he had last seen Evart, and to give (with some omissions) the particulars in relation to his procuring his present place; all which was drawn forth from him evidently with reluctance, but both Evart and Mr. Vernon were so anxious to know all the little items from his own lips, that there was not much of consequence that he could keep back. And he in turn then had to be made acquainted with some things in Evart's experience, the particulars of which he had not known anything of before; into all which Mr. Vernon entered heartily—so much so, that Henry soon felt quite at home in his presence, and it was to him a cause of great joy, that he had met with one so far above himself in knowledge and station in life, and yet so interested as a friend that he could feel free before him.

"I think," said Mr. Vernon, "that you must have seen me at Stratton; have you no remembrance of that sort?"

"Since I received your card, sir, I called to mind the name, I had heard the name, it seemed familiar, and then I remembered that such a gentleman had been occasionally at Stratton; and now I remember perfectly your countenance, although I believe I have never seen you but twice before—once near the cabin of Caroline Jeralman, and again, I think, for a few moments one evening, at Esquire Thompson's."

"Did you know Caroline?"

"Not particularly, sir; I have seen her at times—she took in sewing, and as my mother was feeble, and needed assistance in that way, she used to give Caroline small jobs to do. I never was in her house, but I have seen her, and she has seen me, and seems to know me."

Mr. Vernon fairly started, but immediately made some movement to divert attention, and with rather a careless manner asked—

"Does she live there still? have you seen her lately?"

"I think she is in the city, sir, though I have not seen her."

"What makes you think so?"

And Henry repeated what he had heard at the Bartons' respecting the inquiries Caroline made after himself, and where he was to be found, etc. Mr. Vernon noted down the street, and as near as he could, the number where she could probably be found.

"You say she expressed a wish to see you?"

"Yes, sir; but I understand that her reason for wishing to see me was, that she thought I might be able to inform her where some person lived whom she wanted to see very much —I have no idea who it can be."

"If she should call upon you—but no matter, I will see her. Perhaps, however, if she should call upon you, you had better say nothing of my having made inquiries about her, or that you know anything concerning me, unless she should ask you, and then you can give any information it may be in your power to give."

The time seemed very long to Louise, that the gentlemen remained in the library, and yet she tried to make herself believe, she was not by any means anxious for their company. She had allowed her thoughts to be very busy since her encounter with Henry Thornton. He had altered indeed, but very much for the better, as to his personal appearance. Nine months had advanced him much nearer towards manhood than she could have imagined. His bright, soft eye seemed to her more beautiful than ever, his form erect, and well proportioned, gave promise of a fine stature when matured; and his manners, so graceful and easy, told plainly that he had not been unmindful to cultivate those graces which are so apt to charm. He was the Henry she had parted from with so much regret, only vastly improved. He was also now in a fair way to future prosperity. She had heard of this, and she doubted not he felt himself higher in the scale of being than when he was the poor boy, starting on his lone way to seek a livelihood. Under different circumstances all this would have been very gratifying to Louise. But "would he now be willing to compromise his happiness by a connection with her? Was not his formal behavior at this their first meeting, a token that he wished the past to be forgotten?" "But why should she regard this? What could he be to her, under any circumstances! Had she not positively forbidden him to indulge the idea that he could ever sustain any relation to her but that of a friend or brother!" And poor Louise felt, as she had never before, the sad fate to which she was doomed; and she now knew as she had not before, that every year added to her life would add to the trial which which was pressing upon her. Her pride might enable her

to bear up under it, but it would be by the sacrifice of all the warm feelings of her heart; but she resolved it should sustain her. No one should know that her affections could be won, or that the wall she would build up about herself was not erected from choice. She had indeed, without reflection, met Henry with some warmth of manner; hereafter she would treat him kindly, but in a way he would not be able to misinterpret."

That Henry felt somewhat backward to manifest any unusual interest on the moment of meeting Louise, it must be acknowledged. His interest for her had lost none of its power over him; but he did not wish that anything which had passed between them heretofore should be the basis for his conduct towards her now, or be in any way alluded to by him, so as to compel Louise to feel that he had any peculiar claim upon her. "She was now older; she might wish the past forgotten; she might have discovered the secret of her birth, and therefore feel that a much higher station than any he could hope to place her in, she might aspire to."

He had seen her, too, in company with Evart; and, as Henry thought, quite ready to receive his attentions; and from Evart's manner at the time, he judged that Louise was an object of interest to him. "He, Henry, could never aspire to be a rival of his friend; for *him* he would rather make any sacrifice."

These thoughts had their effect; they operated at the time of meeting Louise, although taken by surprise, and they will doubtless not lose their power in future.

Her name had not been mentioned by any of the gentlemen while seated together: the subjects of conversation were so exciting, and led to such constant explanations on other matters, as to give no room for a new topic to be introduced.

Mr. Vernon, however, did not forget the main object he had in view by his invitation to Henry. He intended to surprise them both; he wished to notice the effect of their first interview under present circumstances. He had not told Louise that he expected Henry, and he knew of course that the latter was unacquainted with the fact that she was a member of his family.

"And now," said Mr. Vernon, during a pause in the con-

versation, "we must wait upon the ladies; they will wonder what detains us."

And the young gentlemen immediately arose and followed Mr. Vernon into the parlor. The latter, taking Henry by the arm, in his pleasant way, introduced him to his sisters, who received him with much cordiality. He then led him to Louise. Both the young persons smiled, as the formality of presentation was gone through with; Henry remarking—

"I have already had the pleasure of meeting Miss Lovelace this evening."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Vernon, with a slight look of surprise, but he made no further remark, and very soon all were busily engaged in conversation.

Henry, either by accident or design, took a seat near the sisters of Mr. Vernon, who kept him very busy in answering questions; while Evart and Mr. Vernon sat one on each side of Louise.

No one could have judged from appearances that the arrangement was not quite satisfactory to all parties, and yet two of them at least were by no means happy, and were heartily glad when their forced smiles, and equally forced liveliness of conversation, came to a close. Henry had stayed as long as he felt propriety demanded, and much longer than his feelings prompted. He arose, and with a gentle bow to the ladies requested to be excused, "as he must be home in good season."

"You are not going?" said Mr. Vernon as he took Henry's hand.

"Thank you, sir; I have some distance to walk, and my furlough for an evening does not extend beyond nine o'clock."

"You are perfectly right then. Obedience to proper rules is highly commendable, especially in the young. And now, Master Henry, you have found the way here, consider yourself invited whenever you have a leisure evening and feel disposed to visit us."

Henry did not reply, for he was just then about to take his leave of Louise. His first thought was to part from her with a slight obeisance, but he saw that for some cause she was deeply affected. Her eye was fixed upon him—not in anger, nor with that playful look which she could sometimes assume; it was the same expression that had beamed upon

him in days past. His heart smote him; his own face changed its expression; he put forth his hand, and without either speaking, they parted with that silent embrace. What feelings were at work in each heart neither knew. It might have been that of intense love, or only a momentary pang of sorrow as the past was recalled.

## CHAPTER XX.

We have introduced the Messrs. Blenham to the reader, without, perhaps, being as particular as was satisfactory. The elder brother, Mr. Horatio Blenham, had been married, but was now a widower, and, as we have already said, was living with his younger brother, and keeping house, after bachelor fashion. He was a man of retiring habits, and spent much of his time, when not unnecessarily employed with his business, in his library, having a great fondness for books, and apparently preferring their company to any other. He was not eager to make money, but had a clear head about all business matters, and had been quite fortunate in his calculations of trade, and was noted for his prudence as well as foresight. The more active share in the concern was taken by the younger brother, Mr. Henry Blenham, to whom all its management was entirely committed. They had been largely engaged in the shipping business, but at the period when introduced in this narrative, were merely attending to their foreign correspondence, and making preparations for active operations. The war of 1812 was just drawing to a close. Offers of mediation had been made and accepted, and the heart of the whole nation was rejoicing in the prospect of returning peace. Mr. Henry Blenham was much younger than his brother, and the prospect of a renewal of our commerce with foreign nations, which had been entirely suspended, or very nearly so, was to him a cause of great joy. A large field would be open to enterprise, and he was anxious to embrace it. On every side he was looking for the most advantageous opening. With every facility that capital could command, he was preparing to mingle in the exciting race for superiority which our merchants would start upon, the moment the incubus of war was removed. He was, emphatically, a man of the world: correct and honorable in all his dealings, liberal to those who labored for him, of a generous disposition and ready to give

a helping hand to those whom he saw were enterprising and industrious, and needed assistance. He was not ambitious of display, either in his style of living or doing business, and none but those most intimate with the affairs of the firm had any idea of the magnitude of their transactions. But he had always looked upon business as having claims paramount to all others. He would have spurned the thought of meanness or prevarication in any of his bargains. He was above the littleness of taking undue advantage of his fellow-men, and his word could be confided in to the very letter. But he thought not of any higher obligations. He indeed attended public worship occasionally; but if his inclination led him to spend his Sabbath in his library with some congenial book, of either a fascinating or intellectual character, he felt under no obligation to deny his pleasure. He did not, in general, attend to his business affairs on that day, but if he felt that his interest might be advanced by writing letters, or even examining or making out accounts, he had no hesitation to use the Sabbath for that purpose; and his office being in the same building in which he lived, and in the rear part, all this could be done in a quiet, unnoticed way. "No one was injured by it, no outward disregard was paid to the holy day, and of course no one had a right to abridge him of his liberty of doing as he pleased." The elder brother was somewhat more strict in attendance at the house of worship, and never troubled himself particularly about business affairs on that day, further than making inquiries as to arrivals and reading letters occasionally which his brother had brought from the office. But he probably paid less attention to such matters, rather from the fact that he felt less inclined than formerly to the labor of business, than because he had any conscientious scruples in regard to keeping or profaning the Sabbath.

Although Henry had now been some months in the concern, he had never been called upon to do anything that had necessarily a connection with business on the Sabbath; nor was he, probably, aware how his employers regarded that day. He was either in his own room or in attendance at the house of God. It was not his business to pry into their peculiar habits; and so long as he had perfect liberty to spend the day as he thought best, it was enough for him "to see to his own heart, and kept that diligently." He found work enough to do *there*

to meet what he thought was required, in order to keep the commandment in spirit and in truth.

Peace had finally been declared, and there were stirring times in the office of the Messrs. Blenham. Through the day, and late in the evening, Mr. Belden and Henry were in requisition, and both seemed animated with new life, and never wearied with their prolonged labors. More especially were they now much occupied, for the reason that the junior partner was about proceeding to China, for the purpose of making arrangements for future trade.

Henry and Mr. Belden had been in the office until quite late on Saturday, and separated in excellent spirits, with an understanding that Henry was to call on Mr. Belden the next day and accompany him to church—the latter gentleman, we are sorry to say, not being in the habit of making such excursions; he had, however, consented, if Henry would call for him, to go for once, at any rate, and see how he liked it. "Didn't believe he would, though."

The Sabbath morning opened in great beauty, and Henry was as gladsome as the birds seemed to be, that were filling the still air with their melody. On other mornings their little songs were lost amid the babel sounds that filled the business part of the city.

Henry had labored diligently the past week; and those only can enjoy the day of rest fully who have thus spent the intervening time. He was also anticipating the pleasure he would have in taking Mr. Belden with him to the house of God; he felt so sure, that if once he could be brought to listen to the rich instruction which he, Henry, enjoyed, he would never again willingly be absent. And Henry had arrayed himself for the day, and was on the point of departure, when the servant knocked at his door.

"Mr. Henry Blenham would like to see you in the office."

"Certainly," and Henry, with all speed, hastened down from his room. Mr. Blenham was seated at his desk, busily employed; papers and letters were lying about him; he turned towards Henry and asked, in his usual pleasant manner—

"You know, I believe, where Mr. Belden boards."

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Will you please go to his boarding-house, and if he is in,

tell him he will confer a favor upon me if he will come to the office; I wish to see him."

"I will, sir;" and as Henry was hastening from the room, Mr. Blenham again spoke—

"And as soon as you return, Henry, come in here, if you please; I want you further."

"I will, sir," and Henry went on his way. He was, indeed, somewhat disappointed.

Not so, however, Mr. Belden. He liked his quiet on the Sabbath. It was an effort which he made, merely for the sake of gratifying Henry, to get ready for church; and the first words he uttered, as Henry entered his room, were—

"Are you in earnest now? Feel queer; ain't been so long—must go, eh?" And he began to bustle round the room.

"I am sorry, Mr. Belden, but Mr. Blenham wants to see you at the office. He says it will be quite a favor to him."

"Wants me! Something extra, eh? Well, I am the man—always ready—I'm off like a shot!"

As Mr. Belden was a man of few words, and Henry not just then in as good spirits as he had been that morning, scarcely a word passed between them on their way to the office.

Mr. Blenham was there when they entered, and still very busy. As soon as he saw Mr. Belden he apologized for breaking in upon his holiday. "But there were some accounts he wished made out, and he had therefore taken the liberty of sending for him."

"No liberty at all, sir—glad to do anything," and Mr. Belden mounted his seat at the desk, and was soon at work.

Mr. Blenham then turned to Henry, and calling him to the desk, placed some letters before him to be copied, saying as he did so—

"I am sorry to disappoint you too, but business, you know, must be attended to at such a time as this."

No doubt Mr. Blenham said this from seeing that Henry's countenance did not wear its usually bright and pleasant aspect. Henry simply replied—

"Yes, sir."

"But before you begin writing, please step to the post-office and get our mail."

"Yes, sir," and leaving the desk, Henry passed through the door into the adjoining room on his way out. It was not long before he returned. Mr. Blenham and Mr. Belden both turned towards him a look of surprise, as if they thought it hardly possible he could have accomplished the errand.

Henry spoke in rather a trembling tone—

"Mr. Blenham, may I see you a moment?"

The gentleman immediately arose, and closing the door behind him, he and Henry were alone together."

"What is it, Henry?"

"I wish to ask you, sir, if I may be excused from going to the Post-office this morning? and whether, if I sit up to-night and accomplish the writing you have for me to do, it will not answer?"

"Are you not well?"

"Oh, yes, sir, quite well. But, sir, I feel so unhappy at the thought of doing work on this day—it seems to me I should be doing wrong. I dare not do it, sir!"

Mr. Blenham was so taken by surprise that for a moment he did not reply.

"Otherwise, to put your reply into plain language, Henry, you refuse to obey my request. I am right—am I not?"

"I dare not, Mr. Blenham, violate a plain command of God. I will sit up all night, sir, willingly, gladly, and do the writing you wish. It shall be done, I promise you, by morning."

"I will hardly trouble you to do that; and as I am not in the habit of having those under me refuse to obey my requests, you may feel yourself excused from further service here. To-morrow morning, come to the office and your arrears shall be paid."

As Mr. Blenham reëntered the office, Mr. Belden noticed that he seemed much excited; and perhaps the surprise evident in the looks of the latter caused his employer to make an explanation.

"Your young friend, Mr. Belden, seems to pay little regard to his own interest."

"Nothing happened, sir?"

"Nothing of much consequence. He has only thrown himself out of his place, that's all!"

"Put off! quit! cleared out! Can't be! some mistake,

sir! He must be light-headed, sir—a little out! Shall I go after him, sir? He must be out!"

And Mr. Belden threw down his pen and caught up his hat, and was ready to go somewhere.

"Oh, you need not trouble yourself, Mr. Belden. It will be of no use, sir. He is not out of his mind, as you suppose. I expect though, he has a stubborn will."

"Saucy, sir? Spoke wrong?"

"Oh, no, I cannot say that. But you heard me give him some directions a few moments since. He refuses to do my bidding; or, at least, says he dare not do it, which amounts to the same thing."

"Sorry, sir, very; expect he can't help it!"

"Why not, sir?"

"I expect he was born so, sir!"

"What! with a stubborn disposition?"

"Oh, no, sir; wasn't meaning that; never see it in him. But some folks, they say, are born with a silver spoon in their mouth; always make money; can't help it: I wasn't, I know. But I guess Henry was born with the Ten Commandments in his mouth; must keep 'em; can't help it!"

"What makes you think so, Mr. Belden?"

"Sticks to them so, sir—like a dog to his bone. And besides, see here, sir!"

And Mr. Belden opened his pocket-book, and taking out a small parcel neatly folded up, opened it, and placed it in the hands of Mr. Blenham.

"This thing, sir, he keeps about him as choice as gold dust. I got it, you see, sir, from a young chap, who some how or other got it from Henry. It's plain-spoken, clear as a balanced account. I guess he goes by it."

Mr. Blenham took the paper; appeared to glance his eye over it, and as Mr. Belden resumed his labors at the desk, threw it carelessly down among his own papers, and commenced writing, or, at least, made preparations for so doing; arranged his paper before him, dipped his pen in the ink, rested his hand over the blank sheet, and fixed his eye on the little leaf that belonged to Henry—and read! and looked away, and read again! And still his hand rested on the blank page, until the ink dried in his pen.

Mr. Belden wondered at the strange silence, and would

have been glad to know what was going on; but his back was towards his employer, and he had no excuse for turning round to ask a question.

And Mr. Belden kept on at his work, but the click of his own pen was the only noise in that silent room. At length Mr. Blenham arose and left the office, and his footsteps were heard traversing to and fro the outer room. Something was wrong! Some new thought had made a lodgment within the citadel of the strong and self-reliant man! Perhaps it has for the time shaken his confidence in himself; or is stirring up his sensitive spirit—for he had keen sensibilities—and waking up within unhallowed passions, and arousing them to a deadly strife against all that has the form of goodness. Time will unfold the mystery.

After leaving Mr. Blenham, Henry returned to his room, that he might collect his thoughts, and decide what course he should pursue.

As he closed the door his heart sank within him, and he sat down and gave way to his feelings. At length he roused himself to thought and action. Again, and again, he went over the whole scene; he recalled every word he had said, he could perceive in them nothing disrespectful; he had endeavored to do what he thought was right; he loved Mr. Blenham—he would go to the very extent of his ability to serve him. Henry felt that in Mr. Blenham, he had met with one who had treated him with unexpected kindness, and his obligations to him he felt to be very great. "But how could he go against a direct command of God! Had he not most solemnly pledged his whole being and service to his Father in heaven! Could he go back? What would life be to him if the way should be closed between that great and good Being and his own heart!"

But what course should he now take in this dilemma. To stay for a day, even, where he then was, appeared too much like beggary. Mr. Blenham had told him to call at the office on the morrow, and he would pay him what was due. "That he did not want—he never would ask for—he had already been sufficiently compensated. No! He would depart at once—he would try to divert his mind from all worldly and unpleasant thoughts for the day, and on the morrow, look again forth upon the busy world, to see in what

way he was now to procure a livelihood. He would go to the house of God, and from thence to his old lodging-place at the Bartons'; perhaps they might keep him for a few days."

This simple plan arranged, he placed all his little articles in his small trunk, locked it, looked round the room where he had enjoyed so much, and where he had hoped long to be a tenant, and then closed the door, and with as little noise as possible, descended the stairs, and left the house.

His feelings were indeed sad—a heavy weight lay upon his heart; he dared not turn his eye even toward the dwelling. It was not that he had lost his place—a deeper cause of sorrow affected him. He felt that he had lost a kind friend. He had been misunderstood! But no room had been left for explanation. With a full and aching heart he went on his way.

That evening found him seated with the Bartons. They had received him cordially. He had told them that he had left his situation, but did not state the cause; they knew enough of the ways of the city to know, that possibly he might have been to blame, but not necessarily so, and out of delicacy to his feelings they asked no questions. His little attic room was still open to him, and being wearied by the excitement of the day, he retired early to seek rest.

Once again alone, his thoughts began to gather strength, and bring before him dark visions.

"Again he had been cast adrift, and was alone upon a wide, wide sea; and to what point should he shape his course?" Never before was he in such doubt. He feared most truly that he had mistaken his ability to succeed in the city. His experience hitherto was certainly much against any future effort. He could never expect to procure a situation more eligible than the one he had just lost. "And was it so, that trade could not be successfully pursued without a violation of justice, honor, and conscience!" He could not tell. "He could not believe but there were many who regulated their business as well as their lives by true rules, but it had not been his fortune to meet with such; perhaps his views were visionary. He might not be sufficiently enlightened; his conscience might be too sensitive. "Possibly he was wrong," and then he brought to mind all he remembered from the scriptures of what was enjoined; all these seemed clear. "It

was not possible he could be mistaken, he must abide by them. Perhaps he had shunned labor with his hands. He had been too sanguine in his expectations in the city, and not sufficiently satisfied to endure the toil of the country. Would it not be better for him to go back? not to his former home, that he could never do; but he might find work as a laborer in other places; he was not rugged indeed, not so much so as when he left the country, but in time he might grow stronger." But some path he must decide upon without delay.

And then other views and feelings would present themselves. "Must he forever relinquish the thought of rising above his present condition of dependence! He loved the finer things of life. Was that wrong? Had he not found among those of high station, as much open-hearted kindness, as pure pity, and more enlarged views than he had ever known to exist among those with whom he had associated in lower life. Did he not feel more at home among them, and must he go back and spend the rest of his days a mere drudge, without the physical strength to cope with the day laborer, and without the hope of meeting with congenial spirits?"

And last of all, the image of Louise arose to view. "Must he forever give up all hope in reference to her?" And now he found, that in spite of all his pretended resignation of that lovely object, his heart was still clinging there. Hopelessly indeed, ever since his last interview, but still unwilling to let go its hold. And now, as in imagination he relinquishes all prospect of advancement by his efforts in the city, and beholds himself laboring through his youth, and manhood, and even to grey hairs, without the faintest hope that he could gain a station in which he could indulge the idea of a connection with her, his heart revolts. "Some effort he must make—he would yet do and dare, rather than cast from his mind her beautiful image."

And thus hour after hour passed, and his young mind found no rest. His bed was to him a troubled sea, and the morning hours were gathering their numbers ere he could lose himself in sleep; and then it was not sleep—a mere continuation of the tumult, only the scenes more changeful and less satisfactory.

When he awoke, however, as the day was breaking, he

was conscious of feeling quite unwell. He attempted to get up, but a sudden dizziness, accompanied with pain, made him again resume his position; and when summoned to breakfast he had to decline the invitation, upon which Mrs. Barton immediately came to his bedside, and pronounced that "he had a high fever," and insisted upon calling her doctor. "He lived close by," she said, "and was an excellent doctor, and low in his charges."

Henry felt too unwell to make any opposition, and indeed he needed good advice and immediate attention. He had gone a little beyond what his physical organization was equal to. Sensitive to a high degree, unwilling at any time to set up his own opinion in opposition to others, naturally yielding, and especially anxious to please, and approve himself to those above him, and with peculiar feelings of regard for those with whom he had been living, it required a mighty impelling force to enable him to make the stand he did, and under its trying circumstances. It was no reckless, hasty impulse; there was no passion of anger; his heart was at the very time overflowing with tender emotion. It was a firm adherence to what he thought to be right, when his steadfastness resulted in a separation from those who had kindly treated him, and the loss of a fair prospect for the future!

This of itself was no common tax on the strength of a youth at his peculiar age; but in addition to all this were the circumstances in which he was placed. Without kindred, without a home—alone in the world! All had contributed to the excitement of his nervous system.

The physician was enabled soon to define clearly the symptoms of his disease, and administered accordingly. Forbidding company—of which there was not much danger—and ordering that he should be kept perfectly quiet, and that his attendants should abstain from conversation either with him or with each other. "He was in great danger," he said, "and the nicest care must be observed, or the consequences may be very sad."

## CHAPTER XXI.

Three weeks had passed since Henry was first laid prostrate by disease in the little attic room of the Bartons.

Since then, he had been lost to all consciousness of passing events. When he came to himself, it was after a long and sweet sleep. His friend Evart Marston was sitting beside his bed, and quietly moving a large fan. As his bright eye fixed its gaze on Evart, he spoke.

"Evart!"

"Henry! — You are better, are you not?"

"Evart, where am I?"

"You are at the house of our friend, Mr. Vernon."

"I was not here when I was taken sick."

"No, you were not. I will tell you the particulars at another time. Keep your mind at rest. You are among friends."

"I must have given a great deal of trouble."

"I told you that you are among friends; and there is not one of those who have been about you but feels it rather a privilege than otherwise to do something for you."

"They must be very good then, for I know I must have given a great deal of trouble. I am sure I cannot tell why so much kindness should be shown to me."

"I could tell you; but I wish you now to endeavor to sleep again. You are better, much better, but need more rest. I think you will have friends calling here this evening —they usually come at that time—and if you get a little more strength by another quiet nap, we shall be able to let them come in."

And Henry yielded to the request of his friend, and again he slept. Mr. Vernon came into the room with a noiseless step, and immediately behind him came Louise.

Evart whispered to the former, but so as to be heard also by the young lady.

"He is much better; he has been awake, and is perfectly himself; and see now how sweetly he sleeps!"

"The Lord be praised! Yes, he sleeps sweetly — he breathes naturally. Come here, my dear!" And Mr. Vernon put his arm kindly about Louise, and she advanced and stood beside him as he looked at Henry. Her hands were clasped, and with intense interest she gazed upon the lovely youth;—pale, emaciated, but still lovely. His dark brown hair lay off from his fair forehead, smoothed nicely by the hand of his friend Evart; its long locks curled upon the pillow; and his hand, now delicate as her own, lay upon the outer covering.

"Do you think he is better?—He looks so very pale!" and Louise raised her eyes toward Mr. Vernon; the tears were flowing, but she cared not to conceal them.

"Oh, yes, dear Louise, he is better, evidently better—you have not seen him before?" and then turning towards Evart, "You had better retire a while now; I will remain by him for the present."

And Evart, almost with reluctance, obeyed; but he could confide Henry to Mr. Vernon's care.

"We had better be seated; our presence will not be so likely to disturb him when he awakes—but perhaps you wish to go too?"

Louise looked imploringly towards Mr. Vernon.

"May I stay—at least while you do?"

He moved a chair gently towards her, and she seated herself, and taking up the fan which Evart had laid upon the bed, began moving it gently over the pale sleeper.

Mr. Vernon had brought Louise at her own earnest request. Hitherto he had not thought it best, but the symptoms of the sick youth appeared so much more favorable when he was last in the room, that he now yielded to her wishes.

He knew how anxious she had been; for she did not conceal her feelings from Mr. Vernon; and indeed all had been anxious. Henry had been very ill. Death seemed to be asking him for a prey; and Louise felt too deeply concerned to be able, even if she had wished, to hide the feelings of her heart. Those feelings had never changed; although at their last interview, for reasons which she thought were all sufficient, she had manifested much reserve. They had been aroused to intensity by the fear that she and Henry were to be separated forever. She would have flown to his bedside;

she would have tended him untiringly, as a sister might have done; but she dare not ask to do it; and Mr. Vernon had advised her not to see him—it could only distress *her*, and be no relief to him, and she had yielded; and as every day and hour passed, he listened for tidings from the sick-rooms until hope had almost expired. And now, as she looks at his placid countenance, and hears his soft, regular breathing, and thinks that he will again be well, her heart swells with emotion—"never again will she think of herself, but only of his welfare; she will have a fair, clear understanding with him as to their relation to each other. It can never be but as brother and sister; to that he cannot object; and, when once understood, there need be no reserve. She could not be in his way then, and he could be her guide; and, as they grew older, she could lean upon him; she could unfold her heart to him, and he to her; and, if he loved or was beloved by others, to see him happy would be enough for her."

It was, indeed, as many who read these lines will say, "a very childish notion;" but Louise was in earnest, and her purpose, once formed, was not easily shaken.

When Henry again awoke, the first object that met his eye was the bright face of Louise, with a smile just breaking upon it; he raised his hand towards her—she grasped it.

"And you too! oh, how kind!—my friends seem to be all about me; how wonderful it is!"

"And where should friends be," said Mr. Vernon, rising and laying his hand on Henry's forehead, "but around our bed when we are sick? and I want to tell you that your friends think a great deal of you; you have enlisted their hearts strongly in your favor."

"It must be so, or I should not be in your house, Mr. Vernon, surrounded with every comfort; but why it should be so I cannot tell. My thanks, sir, are but a poor compensation for all your kindness and trouble."

"You are much better, Henry, therefore I can venture to say a few things to you which you ought to know. You seem to feel much astonished that you should be thus taken care of, and that warm friends should thus cluster around you. But you cannot surely think it strange that Evart, who has just left your bed-side, should be about you, and night and day watching you with intense interest."

"Oh, I know he has a noble, generous heart."

"Yes, he has, and I believe he will make a noble man; but Evart feels that but for your interposition he would have been ruined; lost to himself, his family, and the world. Your example, your advice"——

"Oh, Mr. Vernon, it cannot be!"

"Give God the glory, but be thankful that he has enabled you to be the means of rescuing a dear friend from the path of the destroyer. And do you know what you have done for me, Henry?"

"For you, Mr. Vernon! Oh, nothing, sir, I am sure; but I hope, if my life is spared, to be able to show you that at least I have not an ungrateful heart."

"If you live many years, Henry, and I should do for you a hundred times what I have now done, I shall still feel that my debt to you is not cancelled."

Both Louise and Henry looked at Mr. Vernon in great astonishment.

"But perhaps this young lady will get tired before my story shall be finished, and may prefer to take her leave."

"Oh, no, I am here as his sister; what concerns him concerns me; brother and sister, Henry!" and again she took his hand.

Henry looked at her with every emotion of his heart sparkling from his bright eye—brighter and darker than ever now from contrast with his pale, fair face, and he pressed that hand as he had never dared to do before.

Mr. Vernon made no reply to the remarks of Louise; he understood well her meaning, and felt that she knew how to guard herself even while letting out the fullness of heart.

"Well, I will begin my story, and will try to make it as short as possible, for the sake of this sick man; but he must promise to keep his feelings under all subjection."

"I will, sir; but I feel so much better. Oh, sir, it is enough to make me well at once; to have such friends."

"I have a friend with whom I grew up from boyhood, we went to school together, we played together, we visited together, we read together, we told each other every secret feeling; we were like Jonathan and David, we loved each other as our own soul.

"As we advanced to manhood different pursuits divided us

somewhat; we could not be so constantly together as in our younger days, but our mutual regard was unabated.

"He entered into active business and proved himself a virtuous, upright, straight-forward, honorable man. Shrewd in his calculations, untiring in his attention to business, open-hearted to all who needed, ready to help those who were not so fortunate as himself, and gaining the confidence of all who had business relations with him, and he never disappointed their trust.

"I said we were friends, that we had a strong affection for each other; and so we had; but on one great subject we could not agree—I mean our relation to God as our Redeemer and king, friend, and final judge.

"Long did I labor with him, and most earnest have been my endeavors to bring him to a proper sense of his duty as a dependent creature, as a needy sinner; but his heart would not yield; and fearing, lest by continued appeals on the subject, he might become disgusted, and more determined in his opposition, I at length forbore; our friendship remained firm, but between him and me on those momentous questions which involve our eternal destiny, there was a great gulf fixed. So it seemed to me; it was a sad drawback on my happiness, for I had no friend so dear to me as Henry Blenham."

"Mr. Blenham? Mr. Henry Blenham, Mr. Vernon?"

"Yes, Henry—Mr. Henry Blenham, with whom you have been living. My friend, and dearer to me now than ever, and all through your means, Henry!"

"How can it be, Mr. Vernon?"

"Did you ever read the third chapter of Proverbs, Henry?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I know it by heart."

"Then you will remember this passage, 'My son, let thy heart keep my commandments, so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." You will be able to comprehend what I mean in reference to this passage, when I tell you that the noble stand you took to save your conscience, has been owned of God in making it the means of a mighty change in the views and feelings of that gentleman. You need not look with such surprise at me, Henry, I have heard the whole story, and I could tell you much more. but at present you have heard enough."

At that moment the door opened and Evart entered, and beckoning Mr. Vernon from the bedside, spoke a few words to him in a low tone.

To which Mr. Vernon replied—

"Certainly; invite him up here." And then returning to the bedside, laid his hand on the head of Louise.

"If you can consent to leave your *brother* a little while under my care, I promise you he shall be well seen to."

Louise smiled as she rose to depart; but as she turned her parting glance at Henry, she saw that for some reason he looked sad. "Was it that the title Mr. Vernon had just given him did not affect him pleasantly?" She took his hand to say good bye, he raised it to his lips and pressed it there. She was about to say something, but feared, lest it might disturb him; so she suffered him for once, the first in all their intimacy, to do that which a lover might have done. Mr. Vernon was not present, for he was just opening the door, as he heard footsteps on the stairs. Louise fixed her eye on Henry a moment, but she could not say what she felt ought to be said. She withdrew her hand and left the room.

It was probably not very judicious to admit another visitor; but Henry appeared so much himself, and Mr. Vernon knew that the person announced had been most painfully anxious on Henry's account, and had obtained a promise of being allowed to see him the moment his reason should be restored. It was Mr. Blenham, and he had his own reasons for it. He had felt most acutely the circumstances which had resulted in Henry's sickness; he had frequently watched with him; he had looked upon the young sufferer as he lay on his restless bed, his fine countenance at times flushed with feverish excitement, and then pale as though life was departing. He had felt his excited pulse and counted its rapid beat; he had heard his own name again and again spoken, but always in kindness; even the distempered brain had not caused the least unpleasant feeling to disturb the mind. And he had shed the silent tear and breathed an earnest prayer for one more opportunity to commune with him whom he now regarded with peculiar interest.

Mr. Blenham had learned what no lesson in life had before

taught him. He now believed religion to be a reality; "it was no phantom of the imagination; he had witnessed its power; he had seen it in its beauty; chastening the feelings, sustaining the conscience, upholding a weak and dependent youth in an hour of severe trial, and enabling him to face a frowning world alone and unfriended, willing to dare any extremity rather than violate a command of God.

He had taken the lesson to his heart; he had communed with himself in secret; he had examined the source whence that youth had received such unearthly energy; he had gone with his new and deep-rooted impressions to an old and much-valued friend, and under his guidance had found a new life, a better way. Hope had shed her light upon his mind, and with the humility of a little child he was now a searcher of the blessed page, and had begun to tread the narrow way.

It was no wonder, then, if his heart agonized to pour out its thoughts and feelings to one who, under God, had been the instrument of the happy change.

As Louise left the room, Mr. Vernon took the arm of his friend Blenham, and led him up to the bedside. Henry put forth his hand, and his clear eye turned towards his former master with most touching tenderness. A smile, too, was upon his bright, open features, as Mr. Blenham grasped warmly the offered hand.

"You are better, Henry?"

"Oh yes, sir, I feel quite well."

"I will leave you a few moments," said Mr. Vernon. "Henry, remember, you must not do the talking."

"I will see to that. Henry has not much to say to *me;* but I have many things to say to *him.* I shall, however, say but little to him now; I will not allow him to fatigue himself, I promise you."

As soon as Mr. Vernon had retired, the gentleman took his seat, and before he had time to speak, Henry began—

"I have wished much to see you, sir, for I fear that under my excitement at the time of our separation, I may not have spoken as respectfully as I might have done. I am under such obligations to you, sir, for all your kindness, that it has troubled me lest I should have appeared unmindful of it. Believe me, Mr. Blenham, I shall never forget it."

"Stop, Henry; you know our good friend, Mr. Vernon, has laid an injunction upon you, and I have promised to see it enforced. But I tell you most truly, that neither in your manner nor by your words did you do anything that was not perfectly respectful and proper. My design is not now to recall the past; you are too feeble to bear much excitement. All I wish is to embrace this, the first opportunity I have had for so doing, to tell you that you was right, and I was wrong."

"Oh, Mr. Blenham, do not say so."

"But I must say it, and now my wish is, Henry, that hereafter you look upon me as a friend."

Henry covered his face.

"I believe, now, I fully comprehend your character, and after this, should you be raised up and be willing to place yourself in your old relation to me, it will be under new and better auspices. I wish you to look upon me as a *friend*—one to whom you can come with all your wishes or difficulties, and with perfect freedom. I shall confide in you, after this, without a doubt; and to further your interest will be now as great a pleasure as it would to advance those of a younger brother."

Henry could not speak; he put forth his hand, and it was received with such a cordial grasp, that he felt assured he was not only restored to favor, but admitted to a station he had never dreamed of before.

"We understand each other, Henry?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I understand that you are very kind; and if my life is spared, I hope to prove to you, by my faithful attention to your interests, that I am not ungrateful."

"I have no fear of that. I have much to say to you; some things personally, of myself; and some things in reference to the future, for you; but we will not touch upon them now. Keep your mind perfectly at ease; have no care about matters until you get well; and, as you can, thank God that he has enabled you to do your duty so manfully. And now good bye, Henry; I must leave you, for I suppose Mr. Vernon will be anxious, lest I say too much."

And thus they parted. The past forgotten, except so far as its scenes were the cause of grateful praise to Him who, in great mercy, "bringeth forth good out of evil, and causeth the wrath of man to praise him."

Henry could only wonder at the strange events, which seemed to be impelling him along, without, as he thought, any agency of his own.

His little shallop had been safely carried through a stormy sea—gentle waves were now beneath him; green hills, upon which the bright sun was shedding a peaceful light, were in full view; and a fair breeze was wafting him towards a secure harbor.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Henry had learned, through Evart, some particulars as to the circumstances which led to his removal from the Bartons' to the house of Mr. Vernon. But Evart had only known the bare facts of the case, viz., that Mr. Vernon had accidentally called there, and then for the first time learned that Henry was there, and very sick. That he went into the room, and found it a small, uncomfortable place, and that there would be no prospect of his recovery in such a confined atmosphere, and where the heat in the day-time was very oppressive; and that, in company with the physician, he had procured from the hospital suitable means of conveyance, and had him removed to his own house.

A few evenings after the scenes related in the last chapter, a visitor was announced, and Henry had the pleasure of seeing his friend Belden enter the room.

A great improvement had taken place in the health of the patient, and Mr. Belden, as he took Henry's hand and shook it heartily, exclaimed—

"Can't hardly believe my eyes! Well, ain't you?"

"Very nearly. I am getting well fast; but I should never have recovered, I am very sure, if it had not been for you, Mr. Belden, and the rest of my friends."

"Not me! What have I done? Don't speak about it."

"You have done a great deal for me; you have sat up with me, I don't know how often, but they tell me, a great many times."

"Hold your tongue; don't talk about that. All the sitting up with you, my boy, wouldn't have amounted to anything, if you hadn't been got out of that hole. Whew! it makes me feel smothery to think of it."

"I do not remember much about it, Mr. Belden, only I remember seeing you there. You came, I think, the first night I was so sick; but I believe I must have been delirious soon after you came, for I have no recollection of seeing you go away, and it all seems to me now like an unpleasant dream."

"I guess it must have been. I liked to have got to dreaming in the same way myself."

"But how came you to find me?"

"Thought likely you'd gone to the old burrow: you see we got through all our work pretty soon after you left. Something had turned up—don't know what, only folks were out of sorts—dumpish—sit still, doing nothing—thinking, I guess, maybe reading that scrap of paper you left."

"What paper, Mr. Belden?"

"That thing you carry about with you—keep so carefully. Didn't you know I had it?"

"I had forgotten. But how did Mr. Blenham see it?"

"Handed it to him: he thought, you see, that maybe you was a little set—stubborn, self-willed, notional, and all sorts of things. It ain't so, says I—gentle as a lamb!"

"Oh, Mr. Belden!"

"Hold your tongue, sir; let me tell my story. Told him you couldn't help it, and showed him the document. With that he goes to the desk, and whether he was reading, or whether he was thinking, or whether he was praying, can't say—he wasn't writing, though. Gets up at last, and marches into the front room—took some exercise up and down the room. Thinks I, there's something out of kilter—something brewing—I shall get walking ticket next! Then comes back—long sober face. 'Mr. Belden, I will not detain you any longer; much obliged for your readiness to serve me, but I prefer to have the rest of the matters I gave you to do left until the morrow.' Civil—very soft spoken. Queer doings, thinks I, but all right; obeyed orders—always do that; cut for home—took dinner—went to bed—felt muggy, sour—black, blue, green, all colors; slept all day and all night. Next morning went to work: Mr. Blenham comes in—still, sober face—low voice. Says he, 'Have you seen Henry?' 'Hav'nt,' says I. 'Do you know where he's gone?' 'Don't,' says I; 'but guess he's gone to the old place up town.' 'Will you this evening try to see him—that is, if he does not call here to-day?' Glad to do so, took supper, and put for Oliver street. Woman all in trouble wringing her hands; doctor there, too—long face. You was sick, very—high fever—out at times: fancied it would go hard. 'Can I see him?' Went up into the cockloft—air close, warm.

You knew me, but you looked strange—eyes wild, glassy; skin hot, dry. Thinks I, there's no going away to-night. Takes off coat and buckles to: rather stormy night—I mean in the room—talking, tossing, groaning, crying, laughing, but no sleeping. Worse by morning. Wanted to stay, but couldn't. Told the woman, 'would be here to-night.' Went off—head boozy, limbs shaky. Told Mr. Blenham state of the case. He sat down and leaned his head on his hand; felt bad, very—I knew he did; pitied him, but no help for it; things must go as they must sometimes, you can't stop 'em. At last, says he, 'Mr. Belden, please give me the direction; put it down on paper. He went off; saw no more of him all day; shut up the office, and, after supper, put away for Oliver street. Mr. Blenham was by you. I saw how it was—never felt so bad in my life. Says he, 'Mr. Belden, Henry will die here; it is no fit place for a sick person—he must be removed. Where can you get a place for him? our house is too far off.' 'It is,' says I; 'the hospital would be better—nearer by.' 'I know it,' says he, 'but I cannot have him go there. I will pay any price, I don't care how much, if we can only get him into a comfortable place.' Noble fellow, thinks I, if you only feel so. He's a man, Henry, a whole man, got a heart and soul in him."

"That he has. I hope I never shall forget his kindness."

"I shan't. He's fixed me—ain't my own man any longer—gone for him, body and soul. Says he, 'I must see Mr. Vernon, his house is near at hand.' No sooner said than done—in comes Mr. Vernon!"

"Mr. Vernon?"

"Yes; don't be frightened. I was, though; when I see the man come walking in after the woman of the house so soon after his name had been spoken, I began to think it looked pokerish! But I found out how it was. It seems there was a woman living near by who was going, as they call it, 'the long road,' but I should call it the short road—it's soon travelled over, at any rate—but she's got the consumption, and ain't long to live, that's the say. She wanted to see Mr. Vernon—must see him before she went—couldn't no how die in peace if she didn't—so those good folks had found out through you where he lived, and off goes the man and gives the news; and it seems Mr. Vernon was as anxious to see

her as she was to see him, for he came straight down that afternoon—that is what the folks below told me. And there was a great to-do about something—I don't know what. The man and woman below were there, and the lawyers were there, and all that."

"Did you hear the woman's name?"

"Can't say; ain't apt to remember names, especially women's; always kept shy of them—they're apt to make trouble—and a man is just as like as not to get his fingers burnt if he meddles with them. World just as well without them."

"Oh, no, Mr. Belden!"

"I say yes. Now, you see, from what I hear, all this fuss is come of some ugly she-serpent, who enticed a young girl to steal a baby, and then made her swear upon the three parts of the Bible that she would never reveal what she had done to living soul while that she-devil lived. But I guess the fear of the law would have tied her tongue a little more effectually than the oath—that is, if there is a law against stealing babies. I wish some one would steal the babies out of our boarding-house—— But where was I? Oh, I was telling about Mr. Vernon."

"But do tell me, if you can, Mr. Belden, the name of the woman."

"Rot it! I don't know it—can't remember names. I believe its Jericho—sounded like it, at any rate."

"Was it not Jeralman?"

"Like as not—or Jerusalem, or Jezebel, or some such name: there was a J in it, at any rate. But just hold your tongue, and let the woman alone—she has nothing to do with you nor you with her—and hear my story. You put me out—where was I? Oh, I was telling how Mr. Vernon happened to come in; he'd heard below about the sickness, and up he comes. It seems he's used to the business—keeps running round among sick folks, and poor folks, and distressed folks of one kind or another. Business enough, but I guess not much money made by it—thinks ahead maybe—looks out for pay in the long run, when the books will be balanced. Maybe he's right—clever fellow, any how. It made my heart jump towards him, just to see his smooth, mild face bending over you, and his hand smoothing your hot fore-

head, while his lips were speaking such kind words—you lay in a few minutes as still as a kitten. And then he looked round the room—it was'nt far to look—and then up at the window, and then to Mr. Blenham. 'Harry,' says he, 'this will not do; this dear'— Rot it! what makes you look so! Well, says he, 'this dear fellow must not lie here; he must have more air—better attendance—he won't live here!' Mr. Blenham looked sad: tears—it's fact now—came running down his cheeks—some time before he could speak. At last he says, 'James, where can we take him to, my house is too far off?' 'Mine is not,' says Mr. Vernon; 'plenty of room. We will have him there at once, and then we all will tend him.'

"That did for me; I had to give in, so I walked off to the window and looked out at the stars. I could have taken that man and squeezed him to my heart. Well—send off for the doctor—doctor thinks he can be moved after ten o'clock next morning, in a sedan from the hospital. All fixed: Blenham wouldn't stir to go home, and I wouldn't stir. Thinks I, I'll be up to you; if you can sit up here, I can—can't sleep if I go home. So we both set-to and did what we could. Ten o'clock the next morning the thing was there, all curtained and fixed, and two men to carry it. Doctor there—all going to take hold and get you down stairs; let alone, says I; let me have him. You was all wrapped up like a mummy; so I just took you up in my arms—stop your blubbering—and carried you down, and laid you all snug in the cot; and then off they went—Vernon on one side of you and Blenham on the other; never felt so bad in my life—it looked awful. Thinks I, it's a pokerish thing to be a live man, any how, so many things in the world to screw one's heart up—and that's the end of it. You've had a tight scratch, but you're through now—soon be a whole man again."

Henry's recovery was rapid; but before he was able to attend to business Mr. Blenham had him removed to his own house. He had plans in view for him, and arrangements to make in reference to them, which could be better attended to there.

Mr. Vernon had exercised great prudence in the business which concerned his friends the Marstons.

He had never encouraged their hopes in reference to the individual about whom they had been so anxious to get information. He had not imparted his own views to them, but had adroitly passed over the matter by unfolding difficulties that appeared insurmountable, and advising them to endeavor to let the subject drop from their mind, and to submit to the calamity as one of the inscrutable acts of Divine Providence.

But the time had at length arrived when he felt that reserve on his part was no longer necessary.

He had collected a chain of facts that left him no room for doubt. These, with all the evidence necessary to substantiate them, he had submitted to two of the most experienced and distinguished lawyers in the city, and they had pronounced them without a flaw—of themselves all sufficient if large estates had depended upon their evidence.

To his own mind, however, there was an additional proof in the perfect family resemblance, not so much to the other children of his friends as to the mother and her family. He had known them from their youth, and was very confident it would be felt very sensibly by those peculiarly interested.

His great work was now to prepare all parties for the scene which awaited them, and no time must be lost, as Louise had been sent for by her guardian. He and his lady were about to make an extensive tour through the western States and into Canada, with a view to a settlement either in the latter place or in our own far West; and he wished Louise to return, that she might be a companion for her cousin, their elder daughter, who was to accompany them; and Louise was highly pleased with the proposition.

She indeed enjoyed many privileges and comforts at the house of Mr. Vernon, but there was nothing peculiarly attractive to her except the society of Mr. Vernon. She had no companions of her own age, for the reason that she avoided making acquaintance with them. The only tie which really bound her to life with any interest was her regard for Henry; and under her circumstances, it was a blessed thing for her young heart that its affections had one object, at least, to call them into exercise; and to him she let them go forth in all their ardor, with only such limitation as might bind a sister and brother. It pained her, indeed,

that she could not confine Henry's feelings as she could her own; and their parting scene, as already recorded, had left upon her mind a serious impression. She began to fear that she was indulging fanciful ideas which could not be carried out in real life, and encouraging in him a passion which would only result in disappointment and unhappiness, and she had finally come to the conclusion that, painful as it might be to him or to her, she would change her course; she would not by any act of hers raise in his mind expectations which she resolved never to meet.

She had no anxiety any longer for his welfare; he had made powerful friends, and his prospects for life were as bright as she could wish.

She had also learned through Mr. Vernon that Henry was about to leave the city. Mr. Blenham was soon to sail for China, and had determined to take Henry with him, preparatory to his permanent establishment there. It would be a great chance for Henry, and he would no doubt, she thought, gladly accept of it. "What would there be then to keep her in the city, or anywhere that she had ever lived? and in the West she might hope to be free from many annoyances she was exposed to in more thickly settled places." For Mr. Vernon, indeed, she had a high regard; she could confide in him without hesitation—and to part with such a friend as he had been would be a severe trial to her heart. "But Mr. Vernon had made no objections to her departure, and seemed not at all affected by her readiness to comply with the request of her guardian."

Mr. Vernon, however, had prepared matters for a new era in the life of Louise, of which she had then no idea, and which would bring new joys and sorrows to her heart and the hearts of those to whom she was dear.

When Henry was taking his leave of this kind family in order to return to his home at Mr. Blenham's, he had been informed by Louise that she, too, would in a few days leave Mr. Vernon's to return to Stratton; and as they were about to separate, it would have been gratifying to him could they have said good bye to each other in private, for years must intervene before they should meet again, if ever.

Louise, however, studiously avoided any such opportunity; and, unfortunately for them both, Henry had learned some

things from Mrs. Barton, who had called to see him, which threw a new aspect on the circumstances of Louise. "Every thing was secret yet"—but Mrs. Barton had learned from Caroline Jeralman "that this Miss Lovelace was about being restored to her parents, and that they were very great folks. He must not say a word about it, but it would soon come out."

Henry had said nothing about it; but the tidings had their effect upon his heart and his conduct.

He carefully avoided any approach to familiarity. He thanked her for all her kindness to him, but in such a formal way that Louise was taken by surprise. She had, indeed, resolved to prevent any expression of interest that might be construed by Henry into a meaning foreign to her interest, but she was not prepared for his coldness of manner; she could not comprehend its cause; it threw a damp upon her warm feelings; it touched and saddened her heart, and she parted from the only being in this world to whom she felt any strong tie with a simple good bye, and then went into her room and wept bitterly.

It may be as well now that they are separated, to say a word in reference to this affection between two persons of their age. That the seeming strength of their interest for each other was much greater than is commonly supposed to exist at that fanciful period of life, we allow; and that, especially on the part of Louise, there was quite a mixture of romance with what was real in her affection, yet we hope our readers will not cavil at the narration of their young loves, because in general such exhibitions in the earlier period of life are so evanescent. We shall venture our reputation for delineating truthful scenes, and send it forth to the world as a genuine exhibition of that holy flame, fully believing that it will find witnesses for its truth in many a sympathizing heart.

And for the parties themselves it had not hitherto been a vain thing; their relation to each other under their peculiar circumstances had, on the contrary, been a source of good to them both.

In Louise it had cherished and kept alive those tender emotions which might otherwise have had no play. She had been made the confidant of Henry, and her sympathy for him tended to divert her mind from her own peculiar trials. She

believed him; she knew him to be of a pure mind—without guile; generous and manly in his feelings. To her his image was very fair and lovely; and it is good for the young heart to let its emotions be called forth by that which is "lovely and of good report." Without this charm her heart might have been enclosed within a wall of self.

To Henry it had been a healthful stimulus by which his tender spirit, harassed and oppressed by peculiar trials had retained its elasticity.

The thought of Louise, that gentle pleasant friend, who talked to him so fondly and seemed to feel so easy in his company, and would select him for her companion in her rambles; nor ever shrank from him when at any time his hand might be extended for her aid across the little brook or the stone fence, or up the steep hill-side, and whose voice seemed always so soft and musical when she spoke to him, was not to him a vain thought.

And when at their first parting, words had been spoken by her that revealed more than he had dared to hope for, he treasured them up, and their memory caused light to be at all times gleaming on some part of his horizon. "He was loved by one; one beautiful and true might be thinking of him—had confidence in him; his success would give her pleasure—and perhaps (for strange things happened sometimes) he might one day meet her when he should have made a station for himself in life. No longer a poor boy but independent by his own exertions; on an equality with her, and perhaps she might be won!" And these bright fancies quickened his young heart and buoyed him up through many a dark passage and trying hour.

It was well for them that they had loved; and if their paths, diverging now, never shall meet again, the pure feelings which have had their play will have accomplished a mighty good. We separate them with no feelings of pleasure, and would fain make a smoother way for their young hearts, but all things cannot be as we would wish. The bud that never opens to full beauty and fragrance is not a useless effort of nature if it has awakened hope. The babe that smiles upon its mother's breast and then bids adieu to earth has not lived in vain, for a mother's love has been kindled, and that holy fire will never utterly go out.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

My dear friend Marston:

I have just heard of your arrival by the way of Boston, and should have called upon you during a short trip I have lately made to the country, but urgent business took me out of the direct path, and I was too much occupied to allow of a cross cut to your place.

The business which you will remember having urged upon me in reference to inquiries as to a certain person, has not been, as you may well believe, neglected by me.

I dared not encourage your hopes, because I saw difficulties in the way which, if not removed, might throw an impenetrable cloud over the great secret; and you know, in such a case as this, a shadow of doubt would be almost worse than perfect ignorance of any circumstances that could give ground for hope.

I acknowledge to you now, however, that some very strange facts are connected with the case of this young lady, and although I caution you against having your hopes too much excited lest you might suffer, as you have already, from disappointed expectations, yet I feel that it would be highly proper that you should know how far the research points to this young lady as your lost child.

Try to keep your feelings in abeyance, and come and unite with me in tracing the facts and comparing circumstances, which will be of consequence in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. I wish that both yourself and Mrs. Marston would come immediately to the city, and let me know the moment you arrive. As you will probably go directly to your sisters in Cortlandt street, I would advise you by no means to say aught to her or any of her family upon what errand you have come. Bring with you all the records you have of dates, etc.; and again I caution you, indulge no hope, but as duty now plainly demands a thorough examination of this matter, let us attend to it, and if disappointed, be prepared to yield humbly to the dispensation. Your sincere friend,

James Vernon.

No sooner had Mr. Vernon dispatched this letter than he called Louise into his library.

"I want, dear Louise, to have a little talk with you on a subject in which you are much interested, and about which I have said nothing for some time. Come, sit down."

Louise was somewhat startled, for she feared he was about to make some reference to Henry Thornton; but her fears on that point were soon relieved.

"You will remember our conversation one day, nearly a year since, at the hut of Caroline Jeralman. I mean in reference to yourself. You then seemed to have a strong suspicion that Caroline knew more about you than she was willing to reveal. You remember, do you not?"

"I do, sir."

"And you know that very soon thereafter, Caroline left Stratton, and we have been unable to trace her?"

"I do, sir; and I shall always think as I did then, because what she said that led me to the suspicion, was said at different times, and apparently without any design on her part; it seemed to be forced from her."

"Exactly so—I have reason to believe that your suspicions are correct."

"Oh, Mr. Vernon! do not tell me so!

"Be calm, Louise. I have ascertained for a certainty that Caroline *does* know all about you—be patient, my child." He saw that she was becoming much excited. "I have found Caroline, and have learned *who are your real parents!*"

"Oh, Mr. Vernon, do tell me quick; who are they? what are they? am I—am I"—

"Be calm, my dear Louise."

"Oh, Mr. Vernon do tell me—tell me—tell me—what am I! who are they?"

And springing from her chair she stood before him, grasping his arm with almost maniac force, and looking at him in such a wild manner that he at once became alarmed.

Wise man as he was in the common affairs of life, he had not yet sounded the depths of that young heart. He had not calculated upon the power of the one idea which had occupied her mind so long with such intense interest, that to touch it, to wake it into action by the suggestion "that after all it was a reality," was like probing an inflamed wound; every nerve

would quiver with agony. It would have been far better for her, that he should have gone straight to the point which he was now designing to reach by a circuitous course.

She knew from his manner that he had something of consequence to communicate, and when he mentioned the name of Caroline in connection with the fact that he had ascertained her parentage, her worst suspicions were at once aroused.

"My dear Louise, believe me—I have nothing to tell but what you will be glad to hear; just quiet yourself now upon that assurance."

"I will, I will, sir! but oh, are you sure, Mr. Vernon! Nothing but what I will be glad to hear! Why not tell me at once?"

"It is a long story, dear Louise—you are very sensitive. Be calm now; it is a matter of serious consequence. What I wish is, that you should hear from Caroline herself the whole story."

"Where is she, Mr. Vernon?"

"You shall hear; but sit down, Louise, and quiet yourself. Believe me that I would never have mentioned this subject to you if I had not reason to believe that your doubts and fears will be removed. Caroline indeed knows all about you, but she has been a mere agent for others in separating you from your real parents."

Louise sat down, but overcome with the violence of her feelings she burst into a flood of tears. The poor girl had suffered what no human being of those who saw her from day to day had even imagined. Her spirit was proud. She spurned the pity of those about her, and therefore endeavored so to demean herself that no one should think she felt the need of sympathy. She was never very cheerful, and seemed rather disposed to retire within herself; but when brought into contact with others was never wanting in conversation or liveliness of manner. But Louise was never truly happy. The thought of her situation haunted her like a hideous spectre—reason could not drive it away. In fact, the very citadel of reason was itself being undermined, and this outbreak at the intimation on the part of Mr. Vernon that he knew something positive concerning her, was but a token what power the trial was gaining over her young and sensitive spirit. It was a relief, however, to be assured that one feature of her calamity,

and upon which she had dwelt so much, was not true. She had feared from some part of Caroline's conduct towards her and from the unaccountable interest which she had taken in her affairs that she might possibly claim some connection with her. This relief brought the outbreak of tears. Mr. Vernon was rejoiced to find that things were taking a more natural course. It gave him time also to reflect as to the manner in which the whole truth should be unfolded, and he determined on the one which his judgment had at first pointed out.

When she had somewhat recovered, he resumed the subject.

"As this matter is to you, Louise, one of immense interest, and in some respects of more consequence than to any one else, I have thought it highly proper that you should receive the testimony of all the living witnesses in your own person. The most important one of all is Caroline herself: she is still living, but she will not, in all probability, survive her present illness. She is now able to give a clear account of the matter. She is in the city; will you go with me, and hear for yourself?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Vernon; I will go at once if you wish it."

"Then, that matter is settled. Now go and get ready; say nothing about your business, only that you are going out with me."

It took Louise but a few minutes to prepare herself, and soon she and Mr. Vernon were on their way to the residence of Caroline.

Mr. Vernon did not feel quite at ease. He had looked forward in imagination to such a point in Louise's history as probable, and had anticipated what rich pleasure he would enjoy in thus being able to unfold to the dear girl the great secret; but the excitement already produced had alarmed him, and, as she now leaned upon his arm, he could feel that her whole frame was in a tremor.

He did what he could to divert her mind from the business in hand, by calling her attention to persons and scenes around them, and stopping occasionally to look at the pictures, which in general Louise was very ready to do. She was not, however, to be thus dispossessed; she had no thought now but for one engrossing object, and her hurried step and

hurried manner told him plainly that his efforts were of no use.

"It is rather a poor place that Caroline lives in, but the people seem to be very kind to her—here it is!"

"Oh, Mr. Vernon! Please stop, sir—one minute!"

And she drew a long breath.

"You are weary, my dear! I have walked too fast for you!"

"Oh, no, sir—oh, no, sir; I shall be better directly. Perhaps we may as well go in at once; I feel very weak."

They ascended the steps, and in a few moments were by the bedside of Caroline. Louise recognized her at once, although she was much emaciated. Caroline put out her hand, and Louise took it, but neither spoke.

"I have brought Miss Lovelace, as I told you I should, Caroline. Shall I go out of the room while you converse with her?"

"Her name is not Lovelace. I don't know as her parents had christened her, or fixed upon her christian name, but her name is not Lovelace—her name is Marston. No, Mr. Vernon, you needn't go out; I have but one story to tell; you have heard it. But she ain't well—oh, dear!"

Mr. Vernon looked at Louise. She was, indeed, deadly pale. He immediately gave her a seat, and administered some simple restorative.

"You had better, Caroline, both for the sake of this young lady and yourself, go on at once with your narrative; and make it as concise as you can. It will be a trial of strength for you both."

"It will make but little difference with me, Mr. Vernon. My weary life is nearly at an end; nothing can hurt me now, and if my sins are only forgiven, and God can receive such a poor creature into his favor, for Christ's sake, it will be better for me when it does come to an end; only I want to see this matter all put right, and this dear young creature, who has suffered so much—I want to hear her say she forgives me; and I want to hear her parents say so too—and then I will die in peace. Are they coming, Mr. Vernon?"

"I think they will be here shortly—in a day or two!"

Louise clasped her hands. She covered her face with them a moment, and then arose, and, with a quick step,

walked to the window. Mr. Vernon went up to her, put his arm kindly around her.

"Remember, dear Louise, you are near the end of all this trial, under which you have so long suffered. Try to think of the great mercy which has been so long vouchsafed to you."

Alas! poor Louise was in no state of mind to appreciate that idea. Her trial had the effect to cloud the great subject of religion. She could see no beauty in it; and before the face of her Heavenly Father, as well as upon all his works and his dealings, a dark veil was spread—night and darkness rested there! She made no reply to Mr. Vernon, but suffered him to lead her back to the seat she had left.

"I see," said Caroline; "I see how it is. I know she has suffered, poor dear thing! But it won't be long now; and I will tell her the whole of it.

"I was brought up with Miss Tyrrel, at the Tyrrel place, from a little child. My father was a laborer there—a gardener first, and afterwards a kind of overseer over the men; he was a very stern man. My mother died when I was six years old, and then he put me in the house with Miss Tyrrel. She was a very stern woman, too, and all about her had to do just as she said. I was brought up in mortal fear of her and of my father; what they said I had to do whether or no. When I was about sixteen, Miss Lettie Harbrook came to live with Miss Tyrrel; and Miss Lettie, or the young mistress, as we called her, very soon took all the rule in the house; Miss Tyrrel was often sick, and couldn't see to things, and so by degrees she gave up the rule to the young mistress.

"My father somehow took to the young mistress, and what she wanted to be done must be done.

"About two years after Miss Lettie came to live with us, my father called me one day to him, and said 'he wanted my help in a business that was to be done for the young mistress; that it was to be a piece of fun; but she had set her heart on it.' And, says he, 'You know all about the house of Captain Marston?' 'I do,' says I. 'You know where the nursery is?' 'I do,' says I; 'it is on the ground floor in the north wing.' 'Can you get in there,' says he, 'from the outside?' 'I can,' says I, 'for a door opens from it on to the piazza.' 'Well, Jane,' says he (he spoke

kindly, as I had never heard him before) 'I want your help about the thing; it will be a good round sum in my pocket, all of eight hundred dollars; and you are to have two hundred besides—only think of that!' says he. Money, indeed, was a great thing with us: we had always been kept dreadfully scant; and then I was just thinking about getting married; I could, I knew, if I would say the word; and two hundred dollars made me fairly jump when he said the word. 'But,' says I, 'what is to be done, father?' 'Why,' says he, 'the young mistress is bent upon getting their baby. You know,' says he, 'she has a great hatred to the captain; and she says they have both brought disgrace upon her. All she wants is to get the baby, and it is not to have a hair of its head hurt; but Miss Lettie has got a person who will take it and take good care of it for a few months, and then, when she has punished them enough, it is to be taken back slily, and left at the house again. Now Jane,' says he, 'if you will help about this, it will be the making of us.'

"I didn't take much time to think, for I knew if I said no my father would be dreadfully angry, and Miss Lettie, too, and I did'nt want things to be any worse than they had been; and it aint worth while to go over with it all. I agreed to it: so off we went in a horse and gig, just towards evening, and we got there after it was dark, and the house was lighted. My father staid in the gig, and I went across lots, for he didn't stop in the main road, but in a by-lane that ran north of the house. But—oh, dear!"

"Caroline, you need not trouble yourself with the particulars; it exhausts you!" Mr. Vernon saw that the scene was too trying for her weak condition, as she endeavored to go through it again.

"Well, I will be short as I can. I watched my chance; I see the nurse put you in the cradle, and after a little she left the room; I didn't stop a minute; I went in; I catched you up, and off again across lots, and my father drove as hard as he could through by-roads, some through the woods. You wasn't took to the Tyrrel house; we went to the lodge; and then I had to go with him to Miss Lettie, and before she would give the money, she made us both swear on the Bible—oh, what dreadful oaths! Three times did I have to kiss the Bible, in three different places. And that oath I have

kept, and would have kept till I died if I had not heard that Miss Lettie was dead. I took the money, but my heart began to misgive me. We got back to the lodge; and then I begged my father to let me have the baby. You see, I feared the woman who was to have it; and I feared they wouldn't be as good as their word, and put you back again. I had felt your dear warm breath, as you was sleeping on my bosom, and I couldn't give you up, and not know what might happen to you. I told my father that he might have the money, only let me take the baby; and he consented that night that I should take it in the morning. But I feared them all: so in the night, when he was asleep, I wrapped you up, took ten dollars of the money, and stole away from the lodge. I knew I could make my own living, but I never thought until I got to the city that I could not do anything with a child in my arms to be tended; and so I was most distracted. It was night when I got to the city, and I sat on a stoop in a back yard, and watched my chance to slip you into the area of a house that looked nice and clean—and the rest you know. But no one knows what I have suffered; but I have never lost sight of you to this day, except the little time you have been with Mr. Vernon. And now I have told you all that's needful; Mr. Vernon knows it, and a great deal more. But, oh, I want to hear you say that you forgive me!"

Louise was deeply agitated, but she arose and took the hand of Caroline.

"I not only forgive you, Caroline"——

"Don't call me Caroline any more: that is not my true name. I am soon to be in the presence of my Creator: I want to set all right: let the truth, and nothing but the truth, be spoken by me and of me. My name is Jane—Jane Byfield."

"I heartily forgive you; and I most heartily thank you for all the care you have taken of me. Sometimes I have spoken harshly, because I thought you kept a watch upon me, and interfered with matters that did not concern you. You must forgive me, too."

Jane took the hand of Louise and pressed it to her lips, and then laid it over her heart.

"You have been there—there from the hour I felt your

dear breath as you slept in my arms. For you I have watched, and in my own poor way have prayed; and for you I have been an outcast, living alone or among strangers; but where you was, there I must be. Oh, thank God, the hour has come! that good man has worked it all out. He knows more than I can now tell!"

"And now, Caroline, hereafter I shall take care of *you*: where I am you shall live, if your life is spared; and while you are sick, I will stay by you and do for you what you would have done for me."

"Oh, no, child! I have good care; the people are kind; I am better taken care of than I deserve; and you ain't well; you don't look natural; your cheeks used to be red like the rose, and your lips too. My time is short, but your young life is precious—very precious it will be to some: I have wronged them enough already; but you will tell them all the truth, and ask them to forgive me."

Louise could not answer, but she pressed the hand of Caroline.

"I shall tell them, Caroline," said Mr. Vernon; "you must let me call you Caroline still—I shall tell them, for I have other testimony that you have been more sinned against than sinning; you were an unwilling instrument in doing a great wrong, but you have shown that you have a true heart. Do not fear, you will be set right; you will be thanked rather than blamed, and you will never be allowed to want; those whose interests you have guarded so carefully will see to it, that your future life—be it long or short—shall be as happy as they can make it. And now, we must leave you: I shall see you soon again."

Mr. Vernon had to use more decision than he had been accustomed to use in dealing with Louise, in order to overcome her reluctance to leave the sick room. He saw, as Caroline had said, that Louise was not herself; her eyes had not their natural appearance, and the color had left her cheeks. She must have rest, and as much as possible be relieved from anything that had a tendency to excitement; and the bedside of Caroline was no place for her. She yielded, but not with her usual grace; and their walk home was performed in silence on the part of Louise.

After reaching the house she complained of feeling very

tired, and that her head was dizzy; and, at times, that sharp pains would shoot through it. The ladies persuaded her to lie down, and some gentle anodyne was administered. But as the day closed and the night came on, more decided symptoms were manifest—and the physician was called.

The next morning brought no relief. Like a strong man armed, disease had fastened upon her frame, and from side to side she tossed, restless and unhappy; and although she seemed to retain her consciousness, questions which she asked at times showed that her mind was losing its balance; and, as these symptoms increased, she was more disposed to converse, and her ideas seemed to be wonderfully enlarged, and on subjects about which it might have been thought she knew but little, she would express clear views, and in most appropriate language. Sometimes her expressions would cause those about her to wonder greatly, they were so bright and beautiful. And then, again, her sentences would be broken—incoherent, and she would labor to catch the idea that had glanced through her mind, but would not be recalled: and this latter symptom became more and more prominent, until strange faces seemed to be about her, and unpleasant visions startled her, and the familiar friends who tried to soothe her became unknown, and the room where she had slept so long had an unpleasant aspect, and she asked at times, with great earnestness, "If she might not go now! she had been there long enough! she must go home!"

But we must leave Louise, that we may accompany the letter which had been sent to Captain Marston. It did not reach him until the evening of the second day after it was mailed. Railroads were then unknown.

Captain Marston had been home but a short time, and had been busily occupied in regulating the affairs of his farm, in the expectation of making a visit to his friends in New York, so soon as he had completed some improvements which he had much at heart. It was towards evening, when, on coming in, his lovely wife, with a smiling countenance, handed him a letter.

"It must be from your friend Vernon. I am sure it is in his hand."

At once he sat down and broke the seal; while Mrs. Marston, always on the watch whenever a letter came from

that source, steadily fixed her eye on her husband's countenance, to see if she could read there any new revelation.

He went steadily through it, and although she imagined there was a little restlessness in his manner, yet the calm and rather sober expression into which his face settled as he closed, convinced her that no glad tidings were in the letter, whatever else it contained.

"What does he say, my dear?"

"Oh, well, the old story about 'dispensation:' he always closes with that, you know. But he wishes us to come down there as soon as possible. Now, dear Carrie, I want you to be as self-possessed as you can: but there is some strange news in this letter—read it."

Mrs. Marston read it through, and then, clasping her hands and looking at her husband with intense interest—

"James Vernon knows more, my dear Frank, than he dares to tell us: do you not think so?"

"I do: he is very cautious; he would not excite a hope that might possibly be disappointed; but he would not call us on such an errand if he had not good reason to believe it would be successful."

"If it should be so! Oh how strange that it should have resulted from the visit of that young man! Oh what a reward that would be for your kind act in bringing him here and keeping him, and doing so well for him!"

"Me! What did I do! It was mere selfishness on my part. I felt sorry for him; that was all—no merit in that!"

"There is not much merit in anything we do, but 'whosoever giveth a cup of cold water to one of these little ones that believe in me shall in no case lose his reward.' That boy, dear Frank, I have reason to believe was one of that class."

"He was a fine fellow at any rate, and I should very much like to know how he has succeeded. We shall learn when we go to the city. If it should be that he has been the means of our recovering the lost one I should almost feel like adopting him as our own. But it will hardly do for us to think about it. If it should be so! If that dear one is still alive! If we can once more clasp her in our arms with the certainty that she is our own dear Carrie!"

Mrs. Marston could not reply. She was leaning on her husband's breast and pouring out the fullness of her heart. The

mere mention of the dear name had awakened all the mother? and never before had Mr. Marston allowed himself or her so to indulge a hope. She felt almost sure that their fond expectations were about to be realized. But, strange freak of the human heart! How often it is, in the moment when the most ardent wish is at the point of being realized and we are about to quaff the cup of completed bliss, there falls upon us a shadow from some unknown, unseen object. The spirits droop—the breast heaves a sigh and the tear is ready to leave its hiding place. Perhaps from some such cause Mrs. Marston was then suffering.

"What makes you sigh, dear Carrie!"

"I cannot tell—but there seems a load at my heart. I fear something sad is about to take place."

"So you always feel when under the happiest circumstances. You seem to think that evil must be about to overtake you, because you are so happy!"

"I know I have done so, but that is wrong. I ought to receive my mercies with a more grateful heart, and believe that they are bestowed in love, and not as preludes to some judgment. But that is not the case with me now. I almost fear that this discovery, should it prove as we anticipate, may after all bring with it to our hearts some deep, deep sorrow. Perhaps we need it. I know that I have often murmured—too often indulged hard thoughts. I could not feel that it was right—the blow was so severe, so sudden, so prolonged. It may be I shall meet a lasting sorrow when I clasp my dear one to my breast."

Mr. Marston had never heard his wife use such language. It was new to him, and under present circumstances affected him more than he was willing to acknowledge or to manifest.

"You should not feel so, Carrie, there is no occasion for it. Our hopes may after all be disappointed as heretofore, but we must go forward now; as Vernon says, we must get ready for the morrow. I wish to take an early start. Break the matter to the children; be prudent, though, not to raise their hopes too highly, and enjoin upon them the most perfect silence."

Mrs. Marston clasped her husband's neck, laid her head fondly against his breast and received his warm embrace, and then went on her way to do his bidding.

It was about the middle of the day when they reached the

city, and in a few hours thereafter were seated in the ample parlor of their friends the Vernons.

Very soon quite a number of persons, strangers to them, with the exception of one female whom they remembered as an old servant at the Tyrrel place, one by one entered the room. Three lawyers were there—two of whom had been employed by Mr. Vernon in the city. The other a notary, who had taken down the dying words of Miss Lettie.

And immediately the scene commenced. One of the lawyers made a brief statement of the case and drew out in all its particulars the chain of proof which seemed to be necessary to establish the great fact for the purpose of which they were drawn together. And turning to Mr. Marston and his lady as he closed, said—

"If these things can be substantiated by fair witnesses, you will feel satisfied."

"Perfectly, perfectly," replied the captain, in his clear, full voice.

Mrs. Marston covered her face and gave vent to the deep emotions of her heart.

It was a long process; each witness had quite a story to tell, and was allowed to tell it in his or her own way, while full notes were taken of their testimony in order to compare with what they had previously narrated.

The declaration of Caroline was reserved to the last, and when that was closed, Captain Marston clasped the hand of his dear wife. Not a word was said by either—their feelings were too strong for utterance.

When the task had been gone through with, Mr. Marston whispered to his friend Vernon.

"I must see to it that these people are handsomely rewarded; handsomely!"

"I will see to that. You and Caroline had better step into the adjoining room."

And opening the door, Mr. Vernon stood ready to usher them in.

"Wait here. In a short time I will be with you."

In silence they walked the room closely linked together. Never in their past experience had each seemed so dear to the other. One strong emotion was glowing in each bosom—for each alike one moment of ecstatic bliss was in prospect; yet

the sadness, which was mingled with hope in the breast of the wife and mother, had a chastening influence on them both.

The house was still. They wondered at its silence. No feet of servants were heard, and when the sound of one passing through the hall arrested their attention, they could not but notice that it was with studied care, as though it was a house of mourning and the dead were there.

They listened to the departure of the strangers from the adjoining room, and they too went out with noiseless step, and the doors opened and closed as if the slightest noise would have been unbecoming to the place.

Mrs. Marston, at length in a low voice, scarce above a whisper, for the strange stillness affected her too—she felt as if it would have been wrong to speak aloud—

"What does it mean, dear Frank, that all is so still?"

"God only knows, Caroline. But I fear that some member of Vernon's family is very low—or dead!"

At length the door opens, and their kind friend enters, and with the utmost care he turns the latch. He is pale—he looks care-worn and sad—they had not noticed it before; and as he approaches, takes a hand of each. They see, too, that his eye is moistened, and that his lip trembles.

"Now, come be seated."

He speaks with a subdued tone.

"God is on the throne. He rules—he regulates all our destinies. Come, sit down. I have more to tell you."

They obey his request, and he draws his chair before them, and then again he takes their hands.

"You have at times, when suffering under this great sorrow, said 'that could you only know the dear one was at rest, at rest quietly in the grave, you would be satisfied.'"

Their hands dropped as though all energy and life had gone, and hope had withered from their hearts.

"Sometimes our great Creator takes us at our word. Oh, he is good and just; he is wise. He knows what we need. Try to say, both of you, from your hearts, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done.' You have gone through one ordeal, and now another is before you. Your child is found; but it may be only that you may witness her end!"

Like two subdued children they sat. The strong man cover-

ing his face and with his tender wife giving way to overpowering emotions.

"Where is she? Where is she, dear James! I must fly to her. Oh, let me see her—let me embrace her. Oh, do, do, James!"

"You shall, Caroline. She is near—she is in this house. She is on a sick bed. She has not her reason. But be still, I entreat of you both. Thank God that one part of your long desire is accomplished; and beg of him to sustain you to the end. Her life may yet be spared. We cannot tell—physicians cannot tell—but you and she and all of us are in the hands of Him who dealeth wisely and with great mercy. Now let us kneel together before him; you will need his aid; let us ask it."

Never before had Captain Marston bowed the knee to man or God. For an instant his proud spirit struggled—but he saw his lovely wife and the friend of his youth preparing to bow down—he rose and knelt beside them—and then came the floods as they had never before since his childhood's hour been poured forth. He was before his Maker. He was there for the first time, acknowledging his sovereignty, his right to do with him and his as He pleased.

As they arose, Mrs. Marston took the hand of Mr. Vernon.

"I thank you, James. Now lead us to her; let us see her; let us watch over and relieve our burdened hearts, even if it be in smoothing her passage to the grave. Oh, I believe we can bear anything now!"

Mr. Marston spoke not, but taking his wife's arm, followed their mutual friend with noiseless step up to the chamber where the sick one lay.

As they approached the bed, the attendants made way, and, at a signal from Mr. Vernon, left the room.

Louise was still beautiful, although no color painted her cheek. Her long dark hair lay in dishevelled curls upon the pillow; her dark eyes sparkled with unearthly brightness; her fine features looked like chiselled marble, they appeared so very white in contrast with her hair and eyes.

On each side of the bed one parent stood, and each held a soft white hand, and fixed upon the darling object a look of most intense devotion.

The last token was given to them, if they, indeed, needed any other, of their ownership in that lovely being. The re-

semblance was complete, she was the mother's counterpart.

A moment, the eye of Louise glanced at the father, and then, with a steady gaze, rested on the mother; a smile evidently played upon her lips, and then the mother imprinted sweet kisses on those lips and on her pale cheeks, and laid her head beside the sick one, cheek to cheek: and all the while Louise was quiet.

"My dear, dear child, your mother's arm is round you, and your dear father is beside you. Do, pa, kiss the darling!"

And the tears dropped on her marble face, as the stricken father pressed his lips to hers; and still the eye of Louise sought her mother, and again she smiled, but only for one instant.

"You will tell him, won't you," said she, "that I have not forgotten what we have talked about? Oh, how beautiful to think that God is love! God is gracious: he is high and lifted up. Do you know—he is my father. Henry has told me so, often! My father! Is not that sweet—to have a father? Tell him I have got it yet, and I look at it every day. Is it not beautiful? Do you know what Mizpah means? I can tell you: if you want to be happy, you must be very good—Henry says so!"

"Louise! dear Louise!"

There was a slight motion of the muscles of the face, as though her mother's voice had awakened a new idea.

"Did you hear that? That was an angel's call. Did you hear how sweetly it sounded? You know, the angels speak very soft and sweet: they are very pretty, too. Did you ever see them?—I have."

And then she grasped her mother's arm, and drew her down, and, in a low whispering voice, said—

"Come, come, let us go—you and I together. Let us go home—you and I together. Won't that be nice!"

Mr. Marston looked at his wife and motioned to her.

"Perhaps we only disturb her."

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Marston; and at the same time was about to withdraw her hand from the dear girl, but Louise would not permit her to do so; she grasped her mother's arm more tightly.

"Not yet, not yet; the time has not come."

An interruption now took place from the entrance of physicians, three in number.

They had decided upon some more active measures, and were beginning to make known their views to Mr. Vernon, when he at once pointed them to Mr. and Mrs. Marston.

"There are her parents, doctors: please consult with them."

The father and mother were then called on one side, and, at the request of the former, an exposition of the nature of the disease was made to them, of its progress hitherto, and of its probable termination. They gave but little encouragement for hope; and while bidding the parents to make up their minds for the worst, added—

"We think it expedient, however, to try the means we have proposed: we can suggest no other!"

"Then, gentlemen, we must leave our child in your hands: do what you can."

It was no doubt true, as Mrs. Marston often had said when suffering under the excruciating thoughts which at times almost turned aside her reason, "That it would be better to think of her at rest in the grave, than as subject to those terrible calamities which meet so many destitute females."

But it was a very different matter now. They had found their lost lamb; "they are satisfied that she is theirs; and their hearts have embraced her, and she is nestled there along with their other dear objects of affection." And now another claimant has come who seldom fails to make good his demands; and he has laid his hand upon her and made his mark. And she is in the deep waters; no parent's hand can grasp her from that dark abyss.

They can look upon their lost one, her whom they had imagined oft amid scenes of wretchedness and want. She has been cared for; she has been carried through the more easy and pleasant paths of life; she is before them in her spring time yet, as beautiful a flower as the bud gave promise of.

They can only stand by and watch the wayward pulse, and bathe the parched lips and the beating brow, and know that she recognizes them not, and in silent agony mourn that their meeting and their parting are so near together.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

It is a very busy time with Henry; early and late he is at the desk, for Mr. Blenham is anxious that he should be instructed in the principles of book-keeping, and Mr. Belden has him in charge, and with right good will is letting him into the secret of the art.

Mr. Belden is to be no longer a mere fixture at the desk: he has outdoor work to attend to; he is their confidential agent, intrusted with all private matters, and is expected to relieve the elder partner from all the more troublesome details of business. And Mr. Belden works with a will; his face has assumed a more cheerful aspect; his hair no longer stands at "sixes and sevens;" he is neatly dressed, and altogether very unlike the person who was once pinched up in a narrow coop at Messrs. Sharp & Catchem's, and looked so "snappish and wild."

He has to watch Henry, however, lest he should, in his eagerness to grasp the accomplishment he is acquiring, go beyond his strength, and, in Mr. Belden's expressive language, "have another kick up."

It was getting on in the evening, and Mr. Belden's pen was running along with great vivacity, and he apparently altogether absorbed in the work before him, when all at once his pen was placed behind his ear. He jumped from his seat, and with a quick step came to the other side of the desk, and, without saying a word, took the pen from Henry's hand, wiped the ink from it, stuck it in its place, and throwing the blotting paper over the sheet just written upon, closed the book, and placed that, too, in its proper nook over the desk, and then ran back to his work.

"But I have not finished the task you gave me, Mr. Belden."

"Can't help it."

"I am not at all tired, Mr. Belden."

"Can't help it."

"What shall I do?"

"Go to bed."

"I am not sleepy."

"Can't help it."

Seeing that there was no redress, Henry quietly left the desk and took a chair.

"We shall sail in less than a week, Mr. Belden, and what shall I do if I cannot get through the plan you have given me?"

"I'll tell you what to do." And Mr. Belden came and took a seat beside him. "Do as I did; use your own brains, you've got enough of them, and more than you can manage well sometimes. You know all about the matter now, it's as simple as A B C; you've got the principles; you know them by heart; carry them out, that's all you've got to do. You know what that means; you wasn't told expressly, as I take it, that you mustn't do such and such things which you didn't do at Sharp & Catchem's; but you know that such and such things wouldn't jibe with the rules of the bank; and you wasn't told expressly that you mustn't do such and such things which Mr. Blenham wanted you to do, and you didn't do; but you had the rules by heart, and you just let them work; and they've worked out a pretty good sum for you.

"Some fellows, you see, I couldn't trust to go on with the items, even if they did know the rules; they'd run against stumps, snags, rocks, and come to a dead halt, and make a smash up. No thoughts! dumb!

"Strange world, ain't it? Grows brighter, don't it?"

"Everything is very pleasant."

"Great changes, though; sudden, unexpected; frightens me sometimes. Don't know what's coming next."

"I can tell you, Mr. Belden. How would you like living here?"

"Am I not living here? Only stayed before, it wasn't living, at Sharp's!"

"No; but what I mean is, how would you like to live in the family with Mr. Blenham, when we are gone?"

"Like it much—no babies!"

"And take my room, and have no board to pay, and your thousand dollars all clear? It would not take long in that way to clear your farm."

"What are you talking about? No fun; don't feel like it."

"I am in earnest, Mr. Belden. You will be invited, I guess, to-morrow, to make your home here, and I shall be so glad."

"You will, eh? Well, if it is so, I'll give up; make no more calculations; let them drift me along as they think best, can't help it! You have been doing this: had a finger in the pie, I know."

"Not a thing have I done, sir; but Mr. Blenham, you know, thinks you are just the person he has been a long while wanting to get, but couldn't find him."

"And this is just the place I've been all my life trying to get, and couldn't find it. How I ever got here, I don't know; it all looks pokerish!"

"No matter how you've got here—honorably, at any rate; and you have their confidence; and I do not believe, without you should wish to leave, they will ever part with you."

"I shan't leave of my own accord, without my head should get into a kink and play me a trick, and so send me adrift. But I guess it won't! No, you see, they've fixed *me*. Ever since I saw that man dropping the tears when you lay jabbering nonsense on your bed at the Barton's, I've been fixed. Can't leave them no how; must have a hard kick first, but guess no danger of that. But, you see, I've been thinking about the farm: a few years more, at this rate, and she's clear. But I ain't in any hurry to take possession; get her all ready; make improvements; lay up a little to grease the wheels, so as to make it all go smooth and easy, and then, may be in a few years, you will come back, fortune made, want to retire, go up with me and build on your old place; our houses in sight, run across every day, talk about old times, lay down under the trees, go crabbing, fishing, sailing, riding; no debts, no notes, no banks, no Sharp & Catchem's, no babies! free as the birds, do what we like, eat when we like, sleep when we like. That's the way I've fixed it. But there! a knock at the door. Bad news, I guess; there can't be any more good news that I can think of.

The two last sentences Mr. Belden delivered for his own special benefit, as Henry was in the outer room on the way to the door.

"I suppose you will be surprised, Henry," said Evart Marston, as he gave his hand and received Henry's warm embrace, "to have a visit from me at this time of the evening; and I did not indeed expect to find you in the office, but, seeing a light through the window, thought I would come in and see Mr. Belden first, he seems to be always here."

"Yes, he is, except when he sleeps; and I guess he will soon sleep here. Come in; I am so glad to see you."

Mr. Belden heard the voice and some things that were said, and was on the way to meet the visitor. He and Evart had met so often around Henry's sick bed that Mr. Belden had become almost as fond of him as he was of Henry.

"I came to see you, Mr. Belden, as well as Henry, this time, and, as you are the oldest, I will do my errand to you first. My good friend Mr. Vernon has told me that you are a superior accountant."

"I wonder who told him that?"

"You need not look at me, Mr. Belden. I should have told him so, no doubt, if I had"——

"Hold your tongue, sir! I know you have; I am not superior about anything." Looking at Evart: "I know how to keep books, or how they ought to be kept, and that's all!"

"Well, sir, what I want is to be instructed, so as to have a thorough knowledge of it. I am intending, as soon as possible, to take my own business into my own hands, and I wish, in some measure, to be able to attend to it intelligibly."

"I'll tell you what to do: just come and take Henry's place here. We want a young man; Mr. Blenham has told me to look out for one."

"Oh, do, Evart; how pleasant that would be; then Mr. Belden will not be lonesome, and you will get along so well together."

"I have never thought of that before, but I should like it exceedingly, if Mr. Blenham would be willing."

"Nothing to do with it, my concern altogether; small pay, hard work; sour, cross, ugly, sometimes; can't help it, you must take the world as it goes—criss-cross, very; but you must learn to fight for yourself, kick back when they kick at you."

"I do not care for any pay, Mr. Belden. I would gladly pay you, and should expect to do so."

"Don't want it; wouldn't touch it: come and try us."

"I will."

"Done—it's a bargain!"

"Young gentleman," turning to Henry, "you've lost your place; got a new clerk; you can clear out now as soon as you like; go to China, if you please!"

"And now, Henry, I must do my errand to you. I have good news to tell you, and strange, very strange news, and very bad news."

"Just what I said when I heard the knock. Knew there was something a going to turn up, things have got too smooth altogether; ain't natural. Let's hear the worst first, though, and keep the good news to the last."

"I may as well, perhaps. Louise Lovelace is very dangerously sick; the physicians think there is but little prospect of her recovery; she is quite delirious, and seems to be growing weaker and weaker every day.

"And only to think, it has happened just as her parentage has been discovered, and she was about being made so happy. In fact, it is thought her mind has given way under the excitement, and it is doubtful whether she ever has her reason again. And, strangest of all, she proves to be my cousin! She is the oldest child of uncle Frank Marston. No, that is not the strangest thing I have to tell, after all: it is that this discovery has all been brought about through you!"

Mr. Belden had by this time made sad havoc with his hair. Never at the worst of times had it been in greater confusion; and the whole aspect of his countenance was that of the most profound astonishment. He was the first to speak as soon as Evart had finished.

"I believe there can't nothing happen any more in this world but this young gentleman must be at the top or the bottom of it. Only to think! there can't be a baby stole but he must stumble against it and find it. I am glad he has never seen our babies, for if any person should take a notion to hook them he would be sure to come across them in some out of the way place and bring them back; but it will be hard hiding them. Their screeches would tell where they were pretty quick."

"My uncle and aunt are very desirous of seeing you, Henry, before you leave. They are in great trouble; I never saw my uncle so cast down. He is not the same man as when you last saw him. It is indeed a terrible scene altogether. I do not know which to pity most. Louise is lovely—too lovely. If she should die it will be a sad blow to us all. I feel gloomy when I enter the house now. She was always so pleasant."

Henry did not make any reply of consequence. The few words Evart had spoken raised a tumult of feeling. Whatever hope in reference to Louise had still lingered with him was now utterly destroyed.

"Louise the daughter of Capt. Marston! What could she ever be to him! A wealthy heiress, and with wealthy parents of high standing in society." He beheld her now, lifted by an act of Providence far beyond a height to which his hope dare aspire. These thoughts flashed upon his mind with lightning speed. But she was ill, she was dangerously so. His interest for her has not gone, although his hope is dead. "Could he but be at her side; but take that brother's place which she herself had given him. That wish is fruitless. Now he would only be recognized as a stranger—treated kindly, no doubt, but held far off beyond the line which bounds their domestic circle."

Thoughts fly more quickly than the pen—we must not suppose that Henry was so long in making answer to Evart as we have been in putting down his thoughts and feelings.

"I should be very glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Marston, and will certainly endeavor to do so. But how can it be, Evart, that I have had anything to do in this business?"

"I cannot tell you. My aunt was in too much trouble to give any particulars, and I did not like to ask. But she said it was all through you, and she must see you."

"It is only of a piece with the rest of his doings; don't surprise me at all—nothing does. How did he get here? How did I get here? How did you?" turning to Evart. "Turn a short corner and begin a new chapter. How did Mr. Blenham run against a stump, and turn a somerset and come up all right? And how did this young gentleman come out of a hard scratch between life and death and turn up on a voyage to China and a fortune ahead? Give it up? He's born to it—can't help it."

"I expect I could give a pretty good reason for it all," said Evart, "but as Henry has forbidden me to say anything about it, I will obey him."

"But are you in earnest, Mr. Belden, about my coming here? I should like it much—but fear I am so ignorant of the details of business I should be of little use."

"Time you learned them—crooked world—very; full of Sharps and Catchems. If you've got anything ahead, you want to learn how to take care of it. Just come here; come along as soon as you like; plenty to do; rules simple; mind your own business; do as you are bid; never shirk; up to the mark, and all right. Easy sailing; stout ship; strong canvas; plenty of ballast; no fear of squalls, good pilot. When will you come?"

"To-morrow, if you say so."

"All right."

Henry lost no time in complying with the request of Mr. and Mrs. Marston, and the next evening he and Evart were on their way thither. The latter seemed able to converse upon no subject that was not in some way connected with Louise, and Henry understood but too well that Evart's heart was deeply interested. His own feelings on that delicate subject he had never revealed, and therefore Evart could speak without any fear that he was interfering with the happiness of one whom he valued so highly as he did Henry.

On reaching Mr. Vernon's, Henry was at once led up to Mrs. Marston, who was seated alone in an unoccupied room. She chose a place of seclusion when not at the bed side of Louise.

"Oh!" said she, as she rose to meet Henry. "Can it be? Is this Henry Thornton? How you have grown!"

Mrs. Marston might have added much more with perfect truth. Henry had indeed grown, not only in stature, he had improved in personal appearance. He was somewhat pale indeed, for he had not fully recovered from his late sickness; but his features had assumed a more manly cast; they beamed with life and intelligence. His eye, always bright, was now full and sparkling. His hair had a darker hue, and his form showed to great advantage, arrayed as he was in apparel so much in contrast with that in which he had first appeared to her.

With much ease of manner he received her salutation—but the tones of his voice trembled from the deep excitement under which he labored.

After a few moments conversation on the great subject which occupied both their hearts—the sickness of Louise, Mrs. Marston said—

"Whatever may be the result of this dispensation, Mr. Marston and myself can have but one feeling towards you, Henry. We were interested in you from the first, and we have been anxious to hear from you, but Mr. Marston's absence from home so long, has prevented him from searching you out as he intended to do the moment he came to the city. We have been anxious to do something for you, but we hear that you have a fine situation and a good prospect ahead. Anything we can do will be a relief to our hearts, we feel so much indebted to you."

"Your kindness is very great, Mrs. Marston; but surely it is all unmerited by me. What have I done that you should feel under the slightest obligation?"

"Perhaps—no doubt you are ignorant of the result of your short stay at our house. You first gave an impulse to a search that has resulted in discovering our lost child. You will remember how attracted you were by the small portrait of a young lady in Mr. Marston's office."

"I do, madam—and I think Miss Louise resembles it much more now than she did then."

"I have no doubt she does when in health, for I can perceive the strong resemblance even now. But I want you to tell me all about her, Henry; how you became acquainted, and how much you saw of her, and whether she was happy, or well treated."

It was not a very easy matter for Henry to go over with the past scenes in connection with Louise, for they recalled old feelings—joys and hopes, now gone forever—and many little circumstances he was obliged to omit. He was speaking to her mother, "and it might not be agreeable to her to know that he had ever aspired to a connection with the daughter." And he remembered, too, that Louise and he were but children when their intimacy had been the closest, "and their feelings would only appear to others as childish fancies." He *knew* they were not; to him they were realities, but best kept to himself.

When Henry had closed, Mrs. Marston took his hand.

"I thank you, Henry, for all your kindness to my dear child. But I must ask you: Did you know of her peculiar situation? was it known generally?"

"I am sure it was not known generally. I knew it—but only on the day I parted from her at Stratton.

"How did it happen to be told you then?'

Henry hesitated a moment, but resolved to tell the whole truth.

"You must pardon me, Mrs. Marston; I was then, so it seems to me now, many years younger, and perhaps had childish notions, but I had become very fond of Louise, and when I came to separate from her I felt as if I was losing all the world, especially as she had taken the trouble to ride some miles in order to bid me good-bye. I had then no one to love me. My mother was dead—and how could I help it, Mrs. Marston? I tried to have Louise give me her promise, that if I should succeed and be prospered, and become a man she could respect, that—that she "——

"Never mind, Henry; I know what you mean. I do not wonder at your feelings; there was nothing wrong or dishonorable in them. Did she promise you?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Marston, never. She was frank, however, and said that I was dearer to her than any other human being, but she could never give me that promise. She was, she said, much more desolate than I was: she knew not who were her parents; they might be mere outcasts, or guilty persons, and she would never allow me to hope that I could be anything to her but a brother. And then she wanted me to take her purse, but I could not do it. She then took a hair ring from her finger—her own hair, clasped by a small gold locket: 'Here, Henry,' she said, 'take this, it is a sister's gift; keep it as such.' "

"And have you it still?"

Henry took from his pocket-book a small ivory box, and opening it, showed to Mrs. Marston the precious treasure, lying by itself in a bed of rose-colored tissue paper.

"With your leave, Mrs. Marston, I should wish to keep it; no one but yourself has ever seen it since it has been in my possession, and no one shall ever see it but her parents or she who gave it to me."

Mrs. Marston was deeply affected with the sight of this

token of her child's past experience, and her heart embraced Henry with a stronger hold than ever.

"I rejoice, Henry, at what you have told me, although my rejoicing is mingled with sadness at the thought of what she must have suffered. You, however, she could confide in; you she loved, I have no doubt, and, should she be spared, you and she may meet under very different circumstances. It is not for me to say; how you may feel or she may feel cannot now be known. Time makes great changes in our circumstances, as well as in our views and feelings; but one thing I can say to you, in all candor and honesty, that it gives me great pleasure to know that Louise could confide in one so worthy of her, as I believe you to be; and if you maintain your present character, of which I hear so much, you will ever be hailed by my husband and myself as one whom we are proud to own and to love. But I have more to tell you.

"You remember, Henry, the Sabbath which you spent at our house? it was a beautiful morning, and I walked into our garden to enjoy the fresh air and the birds and flowers. I found you sitting in the summer-house."

"I do remember it, Mrs. Marston; it was a very beautiful day; I shall never forget it."

"Nor I either, Henry. You started a little, for I came upon you unobserved; you was reading; I asked you what book you had? You replied, 'That you had found a Bible lying among the books in the bookcase of the office, and had ventured to take it with you.' I told you that you did perfectly right; and then I asked you if you liked to read it. Do you remember how you answered me?"

"Not particularly, Mrs. Marston."

"I do, Henry; and I remember the very expression of your countenance. 'Oh, yes,' you said, 'it is so full of beautiful expressions; it seems to make God appear so like a friend—a father. Do you not think it does, Mrs. Marston?' That look, Henry, and that question shook my very heart. Oh, I had never loved that book! I had suffered it to lie from year to year untouched, and now how strange it seemed, an unknown youth had been sent to draw it from its hiding-place, and unconsciously to put a question to me concerning it that was like a dagger to my heart. I think I must have

appeared confused. I asked you, then, what part you were reading, and you showed me, it was the 103d Psalm. I sat down by you and asked you to read aloud, and as you read it seemed to me that you felt every word, and even at times your voice trembled. I thanked you when you had finished, and soon left you to the enjoyment of your meditations; but I have since taken that Bible to my own room; it has been a new book to me, and now, dear Henry, I can see the beauties in it which you seemed to see and feel. Oh, I shall ever bless the Lord for that Sabbath morning, and for those words you spoke, and that look you gave me. Only go on, Henry, and tread steadily the path you have chosen, and may the Great Keeper bless you for ever!"

Before Henry had time to express his sense of gratitude for her kind expressions, Mrs. Marston was suddenly called away, "Louise appeared to be much worse!"

He waited awhile in the hope of seeing once more his kind friend, Captain Marston, but he was told "that both parents were at the bed-side, and that the young lady was failing fast!" so he quietly withdrew. As he was passing from the street door, Mr. Vernon beckoned to him. That gentleman had just come from her room: his countenance bore the marks of serious alarm. In a low voice, he said—

"I fear all our hopes are blasted!"

"She is much worse, then?"

"Yes: it will be a terrible blow to my dear friends, and to all of us; we all love her, and it seems so sad to lose her just in this way, when the moment, the happiest moment of her life had come. When do you sail?"

"In two or three days."

"It will all be over before then! Farewell, my young friend; I shall not be able to see you again. Keep to your text-book, consult it daily, walk steadily by its instructions, and leave all the contingencies of life to Him who orders all things well.

"You will feel this stroke, I know; her young and loving heart was more deeply interested in you than any one knows of besides myself. She was your true friend, and she had the most firm faith in your friendship for her. The last words she said to me about you—for she spoke much about you in the early part of her sickness—were:

"'I know Henry; I know him well; he is true—*he will be true to the last.*'

"Treasure up these words, I have no doubt they uttered the true feelings of her heart."

With a silent grasp of the hand, Henry parted from Mr. Vernon, and descended the steps. Evart did not accompany him, so he could indulge his own reflections. His thoughts dwelt upon the scene he had just passed through. He recalled every word Mrs. Marston had said; over and over he repeated them, until they were embalmed as precious relics of the past.

And then the mysterious power which his own simple, unconscious influence had exerted over one of such superior mind and station as Mrs. Marston, came up to view. He recalled that scene, and all the thoughts which had then been most prominent; how alone he felt except when communing with his God. How rich to him then were the words of the inspired book! And he remembered the tender tones in which Mrs. Marston had spoken to him on that quiet Sabbath morning, and the look of surprise she fixed upon him as he asked her that simple question; and the tear which he saw gathering in her beautiful eye. Now, he could understand its cause; and his heart gave praise to God that his young life had been thus instrumental for good to one who had been so generous to him. No pride sullied that pure thanksgiving; he felt that nothing had been done by him; he was at the time merely trying to feel his way along, alone and without earthly helpers, and to stay himself upon the unseen Hand; and in that simple process a power had been sent forth, unthought of by himself, and a lovely wife and mother had been brought to consider her ways, and to turn her thoughts above. And now what could he do but bless the Lord for his goodness, who had all along mingled with whatever had been bitter in his cup of life the honeydew of loving-kindness.

The day of sailing at length arrived, and Mr. Belden had been very busy gathering little "nick-nacks" for Henry, and stowing them away in tin canisters in his trunk, and giving him directions about eating; and for what purpose certain medicines were which he had put away for him, and labelled; and especially did he charge him on the subject of dietetics.

"You know, here there is no living without a man keeps

a good look-out for the main chance, and keeps a good stock on hand, and lays in the supplies at least three times a day; but different state of things when you once get rolling about like a cork in a boiling pot—unsteady, whirling, giddy, qualmish; give in, lay flat, stop the supplies, little at a time; hard crackers, pickles, salt pork, dried beef—just enough to keep life agoing—better after awhile.

"But when you get to China, remember the pig-tails are hard customers; dirty, very; eat cats, dogs, mice, snails, and snakes into the bargain. Keep sharp look-out: stews dangerous; soups, too, very; eggs, crackers, rice, chicken legs, beef, if any to be had—scarce, very; be sure it aint an old Chinaman; hams—bought here, be sure of that; eyes open; fruits plenty—lemons, oranges, pine apples. Keep cool, and stay home at nights."

And every once in a while Mr. Belden had a word to say about accounts—"balancing cash, and keeping up to the mark."

"Never be drove, ain't pleasant; weather hot, muggy. Keep ahead, and drive!" Thereby intimating to Henry the necessity of being prompt with what he had to do, that his accounts might not get behind-hand and give him extra trouble. All which directions Henry promised faithfully to attend to.

The ship lay off in the stream, and a boat was to be in readiness by the stairs at Whitehall, at ten o'clock, to convey the few passengers on board who were bound for the long voyage.

Mr. Blenham and his brother had already started in a hack, to make a call or two, and would be back in time.

Mr. Belden for an hour previous was all bustle and motion. He had the cartman to call, and the porter to assist with the trunks, and he kept going in and out, and up stairs and down, doing something, but what neither Henry nor Evart could very well say; and when for a moment he was stationary, his tongue was busily employed in giving directions.

At length he changes his coat, puts on his hat, feels for his gloves, and casting a hasty look at the young men, who are standing arm in arm waiting his signal, he walks straight out, and they follow on.

It required a quick step to keep up with Mr. Belden generally, but now he seemed in an extra hurry. Henry and Evart, however, managed to keep close behind him, but he neither spoke to them nor they to him, nor did they have much to say to each other. They had been constantly together of late, and had said all they had to say, and, among other things, had talked in a very calm and philosophic manner about their separation, and had come to the conclusion, "that if friends had perfect confidence in each other, and were busily employed in the discharge of duty, and kept a journal of each day's scenes, and occasionally exchanged them, it would not be such a terrible thing after all to be separated—that is, for a time." All this answered well enough when the day of parting was somewhat ahead; but now it had come, and in a few minutes they must take the last grasp of the hand, and look into each other's faces for the last time for many years, perhaps forever. They both felt, that to reason about events in which the heart is concerned in anticipation, and the heart itself, are different matters.

Mr. Belden has at length stopped; a little crowd is gathered where he has halted; trunks were being carried down the stairs, at the foot of which lay closely hauled the little boat, manned by six stout oarsmen.

Mr. Blenham was there, shaking hands with the captain; and Henry heard the latter say,

"We are off at the instant—jump aboard."

Mr. Belden had seen the trunks on board, received from Mr. Blenham a hearty shake of the hand, and now he runs up the stairs coughing quite hard, so much so that he is all choked up and cannot say a word. Henry clasped Mr. Belden's hand with both of his, and Mr. Belden did the same to him. Mr. Belden could not speak for the coughing, and Henry could not speak for other reasons; and then the former broke quickly away, and, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, hastened through the crowd back to his office.

Evart walked down the stairs with his friend; a moment they stand side by side, pressing each other's hands, but not daring to meet each other's eye.

Henry steps on board, and takes a seat beside Mr. Blen

ham; the captain raises his hand, the boat moves from the stairs, the oars plash into the water, the men bend to their work, and away the light craft speeds like an arrow on her watery course.

Evart steps upon the Battery and waves his handkerchief, and handkerchiefs are waved from the boat, and until she has neared the ship these silent tokens of adieu are oft repeated.

And now they are alongside, and the distant "Yo, heave, yo!" comes over the water, and the sails unfurl, and the stately ship falls off to the breeze, and slowly moves on her way to the ocean.

Evart has no heart to remain longer; he is now conscious that a wide, wide gulf has interposed its impassable chasm between him and his dearest friend on earth.

## CHAPTER XXV.

The skill of physicians had been exhausted at the sick bed of Louise; they had done what they could, and friends had watched untiring night and day; but still the raging fever ran on, and the pulse retained its rapid, fitful beat, only becoming feebler every day; nature was losing its power, her emaciated frame was no longer tossing restlessly from side to side, she lay quietly now, and, although her mind was still in the strange world of delirium, she ceased to utter her wild thoughts; nor was her breathing like that of rest, it was hard, almost as a continual suppressed groan; and when she slept there was scarcely a perceptible change from her waking state, except in the closing of her eyes.

A month had passed—a long, painful, anxious month; she had fallen asleep about the setting of the sun, and the parents, at the solicitation of Mr. Vernon, had retired to get what rest their wearied natures demanded, he and his sister promising to remain by her, and if any change took place for the worse to let them know in time—no change for the better could be expected now. And the watchers took their seats, and the hours of the night ran on; the rumbling vehicles that passed from time to time awoke her not, and when at last they ceased their noise, and the restless city had sunk to silence, and naught was heard but the deep breathing of the sleeper, there they sat.

The morning hours were beginning to strike, when Mr. Vernon arose and leaned his head near to Louise.

"Anything the matter, James?" His sister spoke scarcely above a whisper.

"I imagine a change of some kind is taking place."

"Shall I go and call them?"

"Not quite yet; listen yourself."

"I had better call them, James; there is a change, and her skin is moist. She is sinking! It must be the last struggle!"

"Wait, wait Amelia! not yet; her breathing is more faint;

but do you not think it is more regular? it is not so quick."

"But is not this the death sweat? her forehead is quite moist, and it feels cold to me. Shall I speak to her?"

"By no means; wait, a short time will decide."

And again they take their seats; each listening with eagerness for any sign that might indicate the approach of the dreaded end.

Mr. Vernon, however, had allowed his hopes to be kindled. He had been much with the sick and had seen strange changes when all expectations of life had been relinquished; but now he was not a mere watcher; his heart was most deeply interested; he could not give her up; he had not done so; although but faint, his hope was still alive. It was not surprising, then, that he should grasp at the slightest token of the accomplishment of his heart's intense desire.

But his sister began to be more alarmed.

"I fear James we are doing wrong. She may drop off in an instant: it seems to me life is departing; I can scarcely hear that she breathes at all."

"The pulse does not indicate immediate danger; it has changed, that is true; it is feeble; very feeble, but it is more regular; it is softer. Oh, Amelia, I cannot but hope?"

"James, how can you say so! you are too sanguine; you have been, I fear, too much so all along."

A slight sigh from the sleeper startled them both.

"How natural," said Mr. Vernon, after a short pause. His sister looked at him in surprise, but said nothing.

"This sleep will no doubt be her last, or it will prove the change from death to life. That sigh was a good sign."

"Had you not better wake her, James, and give her some gentle stimulant? I fear she will be past help if she ever does wake."

"Not yet; I will watch her pulse."

Another hour has passed; the heavy clock on the nearest steeple strikes three.

"Now listen, Amelia; her breathing is surely more natural; she seems to be taking rest."

"It does seem so, indeed! Oh, can there be hope?"

"God can do all things."

Just then the door opened, and the anxious parents entered.

They came up to her bed and looked and listened a moment, and then turned their eyes most anxiously to Mr. Vernon.

"Do not be alarmed; there is a change apparently for the better; but we cannot tell. She has slept through the night thus far. Nature seems to be at rest; be calm—be patient—be submissive. But you had better not be present when she wakes; it may be that reason will be partially restored; you will be strangers to her. I will watch faithfully. This sleep may do what nothing yet has been able to accomplish. Go and take further rest; trust to me."

They each grasped his hand in silence, and as he had requested, left the room.

Early in the forenoon the physicians came, and walked with noiseless step to the bedside and looked at her, and at each other; and then again at her; and each in turn stooped over and listened, and each in turn laid his hand gently on her pulse, and then as quietly they walked toward the window, and conversed together; and then one of them beckoned to Mr. Vernon, who still sat by her side. He had not yet left the room. And then they talked with him and asked "at what hour the change took place," "and how long she had slept thus sweetly;" they said sweetly; and then they told him to let her sleep, and that nature might do what they failed to do. Mr. Vernon had thought so all along, and was but too glad to hear them confirm his hopes. And then they walked to the bedside again and listened; and again they felt the pulse, and again looked at each other, and finally went out as noiselessly as they had entered, saying as they departed,

"We will be here in a few hours again. When she wakes should she seem exhausted, give her a little sling."

The physicians have come in again. Louise is sleeping still; but has been awake; and Mr. Vernon, as directed, has administered a spoonful or two of gentle stimulant, and then without speaking, she sunk to sleep again.

Occasionally she heaves a sigh, and with more and more apparent strength. She did so while the physicians stood beside her, and they looked at each other and smiled, and one of them said,

"Natural!"

And the others replied,

"Quite so!"

And they whisper to Mr. Vernon "She is better;" and he nods his head, he had no doubt of that; and then they say again "let her sleep; and when she wakes, give her a little nourishment; we must help nature."

Mr. Vernon thought so too, and only wished that more had been done to help nature long before; but he did not say so; he was but too glad that their present directions corresponded with his own views.

And thus she struggled through. The turn had been made from death to life.

At length she awoke to consciousness. Conscious of being very weak, and that she was on a sick bed, and that friends, dear friends, were about her.

Mr. and Mrs. Marston were allowed to see her as friends, whom she was told had been about her much while she had been ill; but their names were not mentioned. She thanked them in a feeble voice, and when the mother gave her a gentle kiss, Louise took her hand and held it, and she fixed her eye upon the lovely woman who looked so tenderly at *her*, and seemed pleased to have her smooth her brow and bathe her temples. And under these pleasing ministrations she fell asleep.

Mr. Vernon was too happy now to be long away from her bedside; for she recognized him and seemed to rest more peacefully when he was by.

On awakening from a short sleep and receiving some nourishment from his hand, she said to him—

"I want you to tell me who that lady is who seems to feel so kindly, and takes such tender care of me, and always kisses me when she comes and goes—that one who is so beautiful? I think she has been about me a great deal, for I have had an idea that an angel came at times, and told me softly that I would be better. Who is she, Mr. Vernon?"

"Perhaps you are not strong enough to talk much yet, dear Louise; be satisfied to know that you have many friends; so many that we have been able to take care of you by day and night without weariness. You are much better now; but you must have more rest, you need to be very quiet. You will see all your friends when you get a little stronger."

"Will *she* come again soon, do you think?"

"Oh yes—come often."

"I am so glad; I never saw a face that looked so beautiful to me. She must be very kind and good; but I will not talk if you say no."

It was three days after Louise had began decidedly to improve that Mrs. Marston entered the room, having been called by Mr. Vernon. She saw that Louise was quite herself, and was gaining strength.

As Mrs. Marston came up to the bed and stooped over to give her usual kiss, Louise put her arm around her neck.

"Tell me—tell me—can it be! Are you my mother?"

"I am, my dear—and you are my own, dear, dear daughter!"

"I have suspected that it must be so, for I remember some things which took place just before my sickness, and, as I have seen you about me, I have thought that perhaps it was all true, for although it seems to me like a dream, that part of it appears a reality. My mother! my mother! Oh, thanks, thanks, thanks! I am too happy. And a father, too?"

"Yes, dear, a kind, dear, loving father; you have got us both, dear."

"Where is he? May I not see him?"

"You shall, my dear; but be quiet as you are; this joy may be more than you can bear just now, you are still so weak."

"Oh, yes, dear mother; I will do just as you say. It is so sweet to feel you by me, to hear your voice, to know that I must obey you. Oh, I can rest now. But may I see him soon?"

Mrs. Marston looked at Mr. Vernon, and he left the room. He had been highly gratified to find that the mother had maintained such a quiet manner, but he had less confidence in the fortitude of her husband. Marston had strong, even violent feelings when thoroughly aroused, and he had been now for some time not only much excited, but his nerves were weakened by prolonged anxiety. He had strong affections: his wife and children were too much indeed the idols of his heart, but this recovered treasure seemed more precious than all the rest. To know that she received him as her father, to hear her call him by that sacred name, to press her to his heart, his own dear recovered child, was a vision that had haunted his waking and sleeping hours.

"Now, dear Frank," said Mr. Vernon, "I have come to tell you that you can be introduced as the father of Louise."

"Has she seen her mother?"

"Oh, yes."

"I mean as such; has she been told the truth?"

"She has; and her heart acknowledges the claim, and they are lying side by side—the daughter clasped to the mother's breast."

"Oh, God, I have been a sinful man! This is too good."

"And she has asked for you, and is now waiting to receive your embrace. But stay, dear Frank, stay one moment; listen to me: command yourself. Caroline has behaved nobly; there was no outbreak, nothing to increase the excitement of the occasion."

"I will be calm, James; but to have her eye fix a loving look on me, to hear her call me father, to know that our years of anxiety are at an end, and to hope that she may be restored to health—it is too much for such an unworthy being as I have been! Come, James, go with me: I will be calm. Come, go with me, and there, at that bedside, Caroline and I will kneel down with you while you render the thanks I know not how to present to that Almighty Being to whom we owe so much. Come, James."

Mr. Vernon could make no reply. This was to him a crowning joy; never before had his dear friend manifested such feelings. The strong man had been brought to know that there was a stronger than he, who ruled his destiny and ordered the circumstances of his being and of his relations in life. He was willing, yea anxious, now to bow the knee in acknowledgment of Providential mercies. He might yet be brought to bow before the cross of Christ, and acknowledge his infinite obligations for redeeming love.

Captain Marston did no doubt make a strong effort to behave with composure; but it was a thrilling sight to him to behold, as he entered the room, his dear Caroline folding to her bosom their long-lost child. That was enough of itself to have stirred the depths of his feeling heart; but as he came up to them, Louise turned her eyes lovingly upon him. She put out her hand.

"My dear, dear father!"

He stooped his face to hers, and put his arm over both the

dear objects of affection. His whole frame was convulsed by the painful effort he made to suppress any outbreak of feeling.

Mr. Vernon came up, and laid his hand upon his friend.

"Now let us all give thanks to the Lord for what his merciful providence has accomplished!"

Still holding the hand of his dear Louise, Captain Marston sunk to his knees, and in a moment more his lovely wife took her place beside him, and their full hearts were relieved as they can only be when poured out in submission and gratitude.

As the strength of Louise became able to bear conversation of any length, and to enter into it herself, many revelations were made by her, and to her, connected with past scenes; and Mr. Vernon had also many things to tell, which, during the excitement occasioned by her illness, the parents had not cared to hear, nor he to relate. And more and more was daily brought to light of the untiring faithfulness of their friend, in following out through all its windings the great secret.

As it had been such a family affair, every effort was made to let the public know as little about it as possible; and, beyond those who had been called together as witnesses, and doubtless their immediate friends, few knew the story, and, to the satisfaction of both Louise and her parents, it did not get into the public prints.

Louise and Caroline never met again, much to the regret of the former; but Mr. and Mrs. Marston saw her, and gave her not only every assurance that they laid not the act to her charge, but that they felt under lasting obligations for the care she had taken, and all the faithful interest she had manifested for Louise. They did what they could to fill her heart with comfort and smooth her last hours. No luxury that money could purchase was wanting at the sick bed of Caroline, nor was any attention withheld that interested friends could afford.

It would have been a matter of rejoicing could her life have been spared, that those who felt so much indebted for her unselfish care of their child, and by means of which that lost one had been finally restored, might have had an opportunity to manifest their gratitude in a more substantial way. But her days were numbered, and all that could be done for

her was to make her passage to the tomb as easy as they could.

One secret had been committed by Caroline to Mr. Vernon, which to his mind threw light upon the hitherto unaccountable disappearance of Robbin Byfield. He never revealed it, for its knowledge would never have availed nothing, and when among the rubbish at Tyrrel Place the laborers who were clearing it away found the charred remains of a human being, he did not think it necessary for him to say whose relics he supposed they were. Silence in reference to the whole of that unhappy episode in the history of those with whom he had once been familiar, he thought might as well be observed, as all were now at rest in their graves.

And now for *home*—a new place for Louise. That blissful word had never touched her heart before, she knew it only as the designation of her tarrying-place for the time—a spot at times agreeable, but never taking any hold upon her heart, and, alas! too often embittered by many little trials none knew of but herself. *The home of her parents*, where loving hearts would embrace her, where every eye would beam with affection, and every word be true and kind; where common interests would unite, and common joys and sorrows touch the same chord in every heart. How her bosom heaved with emotion as by her side her parents sat and talked about it, and about its dear inmates, and told her of all its beauties, and with what joy she would be met, and how eager they all were to know the day they might expect her. And what great preparations good old Dinah was making in anticipation of the happy arrival.

And here for the present we must leave her, and let the imagination of our readers follow her and her happy parents, and revel with them in that earthly bliss which God so often allows to hearts where true affection dwells.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Six years of life constitute no very long period in the average of human existence, and yet it is long enough to make many changes in the affairs of men. It has made its mark upon some, at least, of those whose history we have been narrating.

A vessel from China had been announced as "off the Hook," and Mr. Blenham's office was quite in commotion in consequence of the very unsettled condition into which the head clerk of that establishment had been thrown by that announcement. He seemed to be unable to attend to any one thing for more than a few minutes at a time, and kept not only himself but the chairs and books and papers in a constant move.

Mr. Belden was just then alone. The elder Mr. Blenham, since the return of his brother from China, had given up all interest in the concern; he had married, and retired to a handsome seat he had purchased, not many miles from the home of Captain Marston. Of course, his seat in the office was vacant.

Mr. Henry Blenham had gone on the Battery, in order to obtain, if possible, the earliest information as to the vessel said to be below, and the junior clerks had left for dinner.

Both Mr. Blenham and Mr. Belden had been on the look-out now for more than four weeks for the arrival of the good ship Huntress, as in that vessel Mr. Henry Thornton was expected to be a passenger. His health had failed him, and, although the physicians at Canton had ordered his immediate return to the United States as the only chance he could have for life, he had refused to leave his post until his principal could be informed of his condition, and have opportunity to adopt measures whereby he could be relieved. He had done well for his employers, and great success had attended the concern ever since the management of business there had been under Henry's care.

Mr. Blenham had, on receiving notice of the ill-health of

his protégé, written a very decided letter, enjoining him to leave instantly, and directing him as to the persons with whom he might intrust whatever business should remain unsettled, and as the Huntress was the first vessel expected after that letter had been received by Henry, his friends in New York had good reason for expecting him to take passage in her.

Mr. Blenham had been out more than an hour, and as Mr. Belden noticed that, on entering the office, he looked somewhat disappointed, he exclaimed, in his quick way—

"Not the Huntress?"

"Yes, the Huntress has arrived, but no passengers, so the pilot reports, who has just come up. She is in the lower bay yet."

"What does it mean?"

"I am fearful he has not been able to come; we shall no doubt have letters, though. Where are the boys? One of them had better go to the office."

"Charles will stop as he comes from dinner—time he was here now."

In a few moments the young man who had the situation Henry once filled, came in, and handed quite a package to Mr. Blenham.

Mr. Belden could not retain his position at the desk under such circumstances, so, leaving his stool, he took a stand near to the side of Mr. Blenham, although at a sufficient distance to be respectful. Mr. Blenham was seated at his own desk, and had just opened a letter; it was not in Henry's handwriting.

"Alive, sir?" Mr. Belden could not wait until the letter was perused.

"I hope so; but I think from the tenor of this letter that he has been much worse than he gave us reason to believe."

"Just like him; knew it would be so; obstinate, very—set, self-willed."

"It appears that he is gone to England."

"Then he's a dead man! Sure death to weak lungs—damp, foggy, muggy, cold!"

"He was quite low, and had to be carried on board the vessel. Poor fellow! I am very sorry I left him there; but he has said nothing until the last letter he wrote about his health,

nothing that led me to believe he was not quite well. I am very sorry."

"He'd never tell until he's dying; he'd say nothing ailed him as he was taking his last breath! Stuffy, willful, too much head. He's gone—dead and buried, no doubt! He's"—

Mr. Belden stopped very short, and, jumping again upon his seat, began to write furiously.

In a few moments, Mr. Blenham exclaimed—

"Letters from England. What vessel has arrived, Charles?"

"I believe it is the ship Ann, sir. She was reported below this morning."

Mr. Belden was again by the side of Mr. Blenham.

"From Henry, sir?"

"Not his writing."

"Evart Marston. I know the hand."

It was, indeed, from Evart. He had gone to Europe about six months previous, in company with Captain Marston and his two daughters, Louise and Caroline. The latter young lady not being in good health, her father had resolved to try the effect of a voyage and the climate of France for a short time.

The purport of the letter was, "that Henry had arrived at Liverpool; that he was better when he started from Whampoa, so he said."

"Don't believe it—always said so."

Mr. Blenham had become accustomed to Mr. Belden's manner, so he read on without heeding the interruption.

"But he is very feeble; and it was very strange how they met with him."

"Always was so; things always happening strange with him."

"'And very fortunate that he arrived the day before we were about to sail for New York; he would have been alone among strangers. We shall now remain until he gets a little rested from his long voyage, and able to bear the run across the Atlantic.'

"We have reason to be glad, Mr. Belden, that he is among friends."

"Always stumbling among them; he'll find them somehow—middle of Africa!"

These letters explained matters so far as to account for the

disappointment which those friends experienced at not seeing him by the Huntress, but it was not very satisfactory to know that he was so much reduced as not to be able to write.

Some weeks elapsed before any tidings were again brought to them. In the meantime, we must take a view of things beyond the Atlantic.

It was apparently very accidental that Mr. Marston and his family heard of his arrival. They were boarding for a few days at an American hotel in Liverpool, waiting for the "packet day." Evart overheard the captain of an East Indiaman, who had just arrived, inquiring of some of the attendants for the room of Mr. Thornton, and at the same time asking if they knew "how he was?"

The name attracted the attention of young Marston, and he took the liberty at once of making some inquiries.

He found "that Mr. Thornton was an American gentleman from China; that he had sailed for Calcutta in an English brig, being ordered by his physicians to leave at once on account of his health; and as no vessel was to sail for America for some weeks, he concluded to return home by way of England. That he had been better after leaving Calcutta, but for the last three weeks the weather had been very boisterous, which confined him to the cabin, and in consequence he had suffered much from sea-sickness; that he was a fine fellow; always cheerful at the worst of times, and seemed to fear death no more than he would a trip across the Channel."

Evart immediately sent up his card, and to his delight, which however was mingled with both astonishment and grief, was soon in the arms of his friend.

Henry was able to sit up, but quite feeble; he had altered much. He was tall, and now very slender; his complexion a pale yellow; his hair dark; his eyes bright and sparkling as ever; the aspect of his countenance manly; and he seemed rather of the age of thirty-five than twenty-four.

He was still full of hope—his weakness he attributed entirely "to a long turn of sea-sickness." He coughed considerably when attempting to converse, but said "that was in consequence of a slight cold he had taken on nearing the coast of England." He would be better, he knew, "by a few days' rest."

Evart lost no time in communicating the intelligence that so many of his friends were under the same roof with him, and very soon his hand was grasped warmly by his old friend Captain Marston.

The captain knew how important it was to have him hopeful and united with him in the expectation that a few days would change matters materially. "But" said he, "you will not be able to go with us in this packet; she sails to-morrow. We will wait until the next month. Our berths are taken, but we can dispose of them, as there are applications daily, and all are engaged."

To this Henry tried to make objections, but to no purpose; so the matter was settled.

Two weeks passed and Henry had in some measure recruited; but his cough had assumed a more serious character; the climate was evidently aggravating his malady, and at the advice of physicians, Captain Marston resolved to return home by way of the West Indies, and took passage for them all for Bermuda.

The result was all that could have been desired. A few days after leaving the coast of England his symptoms modified, and very soon his cough had left, and his appetite returned.

His strength day by day increased, and he could walk the deck an hour at a time without fatigue. His whole appearance, too, changed for the better; but faint traces were left of the boy Henry. There was now a richer cast to the whole expression of his countenance. Mild still, but more marked with serious thought. Cares had been upon him; business of great importance, requiring strict attention and shrewd discernment; and these had given a character to a countenance perhaps previously too strongly marked by the milder traits.

He was of equal stature with Captain Marston, and as they walked the deck arm in arm, it could not but be noticed how perfectly they agreed in height and form; for although Henry was somewhat slender now, it was manifest that the loss of flesh alone made the difference; the outline of his figure was complete in its manly proportions. Whether Evart felt any chagrin because he himself had stopped so soon in his growth, we cannot say; we hope not; but he appeared diminutive by the side of Henry. His form, too, by no means imperfect, was of a more effeminate cast; his countenance quite agreea-

ble and perhaps by some thought handsome, was not, however, marked by any peculiar expression but that of gentleness and good nature.

We mention these matters not because of their real consequence, but only for the reason that such little things do at times have an effect upon the minds of some, quite disproportionate to their importance.

We shall not stop to portray the meeting between Henry and the two sisters. Caroline he had never seen but once, and then she was a little girl, and he a stranger boy; and it was utterly out of the power of either to recall anything in the appearance of the other that reminded them of their former interview. Caroline was a pretty young lady, not quite so tall as Louise, who had attained the full stature of her mother. Her hair was light, her eyes a dark blue; her complexion fair, much fairer than that of Louise; her features well formed, and her manners peculiarly graceful; very playful in her feelings, and often trying to wake up her sister to be as cheery as herself.

On the voyage, Caroline had become very intimate with Henry, and it seemed to be her delight to get from him a good hearty laugh. "She knew," she said, "it was good for him;" and whispering to Louise, "I like to see him laugh, his countenance brightens up so beautifully. He is very handsome, is he not?" To which Louise would give a very modified assent, and if possible immediately turn to some other subject.

One evening—a beautiful moon-light evening—Henry had been ordered by Captain Marston and Caroline, who always united with her father in urging requirements which were for his good, to go below, as he had been long enough exposed to the night air, and Henry with some reluctance had obeyed. Evart and Caroline were walking the deck, and Louise was seated by her father near the bulwarks of the vessel admiring the beautiful play of the moonbeams on the curling waves, when Captain Marston commenced upon a subject which to him had now become quite a hobby.

He had no thought whether it was agreeable or not to Louise. Perhaps he felt confident that after what had passed, and from the fact that Henry had, although unconscious of his agency, been the means of the re-union of herself and family, he must be an object of interest to them all; a friend

they all dearly prized. Beyond that, he doubtless thought not. He was perfectly ignorant of Henry's former feelings. Mrs. Marston had kept that secret to herself, and no one, not even her mother, had ever known from any word or act of Louise, that she indulged any peculiar feelings towards Henry.

Captain Marston therefore spoke unreservedly, and as he would had Henry been a brother of the dear girl by his side; but his mind was much upon him, and he seemed to take delight in letting out his thoughts.

"It is very strange," he said, "but from the first time I saw Henry I took a fancy to him; there was something that interested me. He was so prompt; his countenance had such an honest expression; sad at times; but, poor fellow, he had reason for that. He was just in the situation one might be—cut adrift on this mighty waste of waters, in a small boat, to find his way to land as best he could. My heart ached for him, and as you have no doubt heard, I kept him some days to find out what he was equal to; but when I left him in the stage and shook his hand, and saw that sad expression as he said good bye, I felt like a child, and was on the point of jumping into my gig and riding after the stage to bring him back again to our home."

Louise had not heard these particulars before. She wiped away a tear, but it was unnoticed by her father.

"But he has turned out as I expected. He has made his way manfully. Somehow he has fallen into good hands. I have been talking with him occasionally about his situation in China. I have had to get out the particulars by asking questions; but it is a wonder he is alive. Blenham knew nothing for a long while of his being unwell, but then he was at the head of their concern. (Blenham stayed there but two years.) Suffering constant pain, but keeping about; purchasing cargoes; watching the Chinese rogues, and attending to all the minutia of their business. And Blenham has told me that his selections of cargoes have been the finest they ever had.

"And he would have died at his post there, before he would have left it, until the house could take some steps to relieve him. I feel proud of him, and I have no doubt Blenham does. He will have a hearty welcome when he gets back, if he only gets his health. We must take him home with us, and mamma will nurse him. What a lovely night it is."

This last remark was made to Evart and Caroline. They had come up, and were standing a moment, the latter attentively listening to her father's remarks.

"Papa, I rather think sis is tired, she looks so very sober."

Evart cast a glance at Louise as Caroline said this. It was indeed so: and some young ladies might have put on a pretty smile, as an assurance that the opinion was not correct, or that the serious look was not caused by anything which had been the subject of conversation. But Louise made no attempt whatever to counteract any impression her appearance at the time might have made.

"I have been talking about Henry, and telling Louise some things which, perhaps, she has not heard."

"And I have been telling Evart how surprised I have been to find that he has had time to cultivate his mind so highly, in the midst of so much business."

"What an air of independence he has, too. It must be hard to do it, but it does make a man of one to be compelled to work his own way."

"I think, sister Carrie," said Louise, "that depends very much upon the character of the individual. Hardships in youth affect the disposition, and sometimes destroy the sensibilities; create a morose temper; and if the individual should prosper, he would be very overbearing and opinionated. Do you not think so, papa?"

"I think it is high time you pusses turned in; here it is ten o'clock."

Evart had not for the past few days been happy; his mind was evidently laboring under some unpleasant feelings. He had been rallied about his demureness, and pleasantly chidden by his sprightly cousin Caroline for some short answers he had given her, all which at the time he had endeavored to smooth over and apologize for. But there was something wrong working within; he was not the open, frank, agreeable Evart; and we must look into matters, and review his history a little, in order to get a true understanding of the difficulty.

When Louise had recovered from her long and serious illness, and had taken her place at the paternal home, Evart continued the same attention which he had paid to her when at

Mr. Vernon's, with this exception, that he could only make occasional visits.

Louise always received him kindly, but without any suspicion that these visits were intended especially for her. She acted without reserve; was ever ready to take his arm for an evening or morning walk, and treated him with the same familiarity she might have exercised towards a brother.

At each interview Evart became more and more enamored, and always resolved, after his return to the city, that on the next opportunity he would have a "free talk" with Louise. His courage, however, for a long time failed him at the opportune moment: why it was, he could not tell, but there was a certain demeanor on the part of his fair cousin that threw a damper upon his spirits whenever he had, as he thought, made up his mind to bring things to a climax. She was very kind and free with him, but he could not lay hold upon any particular act or word or look of Louise that assured him of an interest in her heart.

It was, however, getting to be a serious matter; Louise was much caressed; company was flocking from the city to his uncle's; young gentlemen—some with great accomplishments, and some with wealth far beyond his—were evidently paying court to her. Her name was mentioned in almost every circle of acquaintance he met with, and he felt quite sure that most of the extra attention paid to himself was on account of his connection with the beautiful heiress, Louise Lovelace Marston; and alarmed lest the prize should be carried off by some more adventurous lover, Evart made the desperate effort, and laid his mind open to his much-loved cousin.

Louise knew Evart well: she knew he had a noble, generous heart: she knew, also, that he sought not her hand for the attachments connected with it; he was not anxious to increase his wealth, but rather solicitous how to use what he had in such a manner as to make it a blessing to himself and others. She had respect for him, too, as a young man who was taking a noble stand on the side of right; of a pure mind, amiable temper, and rapidly improving in general knowledge. She almost wished she could give her heart to him, and she most heartily wished he would have been content with such affection as she had felt and manifested ever

since their relation to each other had been known. She felt sad, indeed, while she listened to the story he had to tell, but honesty demanded of her at once a clear and definite reply. She made it frankly, but with much delicacy and tenderness: she had to deny his suit, but it was done in her own sincere, ingenuous, fearless way.

Evart was disappointed; but he parted from his cousin loving her more than ever, and fully assured that his declaration as a lover had not, and would not, cast a shadow on their future intimacy.

The answer that Louise gave was accompanied with, perhaps, more in the way of explanation than is customary on such occasions; and, although Evart could not comprehend all her meaning, he obtained an impression from it, "that she was not quite free to enter in any such engagement, that her mind was in an unsettled state, and that she thought herself too young to trust for life the emotions she then had."

But the more he thought afterwards of the answer she had given him, the more difficult it became for his mind to decide as to the true nature of her reasons. He, however, came to the conclusion that among her suitors there was one she preferred to all others, and, although she might not be willing to risk the happiness of her whole life upon the strength of her feelings towards him, yet they were too powerful to allow of any competitor.

Thus were matters when Evart became of age, and, of course, master of his own fortune.

He had retained his situation at the Messrs. Blenham's until some time after the return of the junior partner from China; he had applied himself faithfully to the details of business, much to the comfort and pride of Mr. Belden, who had ventured to engage him on his own responsibility.

But, coming of age, it was necessary for him to devote his attention to his own affairs, and, although on very intimate terms with Messrs. Blenham, he was obliged to withdraw from their service as a clerk.

Evart had held on his way; the great change which he made in his course of life proved to be no sudden freak of feeling. A new set of friends surrounded him; men of business welcomed him among them, and men whose energies

were directed to benevolent objects rejoiced to find him ever ready to coöperate with them.

His old associates always received his courteous bow whenever they met, but nothing further. Some of them were drooping under premature decay, their powers of body yielding to disease, and their minds debilitated from the mere want of some object of pursuit, helpless victims of their own folly; their feet were treading that desolate path which leads to an untimely grave.

Joe Foster had wasted his own inheritance, had been turned out of the society to which he was accustomed, for having been detected in trickery at the gambling-table, and had been sent abroad by his father, in order to save his relations from the scandal of his presence in the city.

The great trial of Evart was occasioned by the fact, that in spite of all his remonstrances and persuasions, his sister had engaged herself to Sam Lovell. But Evart resolved that since it must be, no effort should be wanting on his part to gain the confidence of his future brother. Something might be done he hoped by kindness and attention, to win Tom from the way of evil; he was not yet, apparently, beyond recovery; and was very fond of Evart.

As Evart had determined upon a voyage to Europe, the proposition which his uncle made that he should be one of their party, met with his joyful assent. To be thus isolated with his fair cousin, at once raised his hopes. "She would be away from all suitors; dependent much upon his attention." At least it would be great happiness for him to be so constantly in her society.

Evart's hopes were not as bright now as when he left New York. An element of trouble has made a lodgment in his hitherto unruffled mind, and that from a cause most unexpected.

That Henry or Louise had any peculiar regard for each other, Evart never suspected. Henry had kept all his thoughts and feelings on that subject within his own breast, and Louise had never, by word or sign, that Evart had noticed, during Henry's long absence, given the least token that she regarded him with any interest such as her parents manifested.

But some combined trifles have, since Henry's recent introduction to their circle, awakened in the mind of Evart a new view of things. There was something in the conduct and

appearance of Louise at the time when he announced the arrival of Henry at Liverpool, and the fact of his being so unwell, that surprised Evart. It was a momentary ebullition of feeling, and it passed off quickly, but it was a stranger manifestation of deep concern than he had ever witnessed in Louise on any previous occasion.

There had also been since then, and more especially on board ship, little events taking place. "Perhaps he caught her eye fixed with peculiar gaze at Henry, as he and Henry might be walking or seated together." Sometimes an emotion manifested, when "suddenly his name was mentioned," and a restlessness if he should happen for a time to be the subject of conversation.

The idea having once taken possession of his mind, many things in the past, unthought of before, came to remembrance, and very many little occurrences which he now daily witnessed, seemed all to point clearly to the fact that Louise was more deeply interested in Henry than she wished should be known, or that any one besides himself in the least suspected.

"Could it be that Henry was his rival?" The very suspicion seemed to bring at once the shadow of a dark cloud over their friendship. "And if it should be so, his own case was hopeless!"

He knew that by the side of Henry he was at a disadvantage. In personal appearance, in that charm which attaches to one who has battled with the world, who has struggled in the bitter contest and come off in triumph; who can recount soul-stirring adventures, or scenes of severe trial or imminent peril; who has encountered alone the stern vicissitudes and done the real work of life!

Evart had heard the terms of high admiration in which Henry had been spoken of before Louise, and he had noticed, or thought he did, a richer flush upon her cheek. Alas! for poor human nature; even sacred friendship is not safe when our self-interest is in danger!

We will not pursue the theme—it pains our heart to write for human eye to read the hateful fact, but it must be done. Evart, the generous, loving, devoted friend, is turning a cold eye upon him who has been so long cherished in his heart. And a host of evil feelings are starting up; and as they awake to strength, the purer, nobler emotions slip away; reason loses

her power; she no longer controls his mind. All Henry's fine qualities are forgotten; all that is engaging in his manners or his mind, only makes him more dangerous. Evart wishes he could avoid his presence—he wishes he was on land, to have more space, to get beyond an influence that only goads him on from one unhappy state of mind to another!

These feelings had attained their greatest strength on the Saturday evening previous to their arrival at Bermuda. All were rejoicing in the prospect of a speedy sight of green fields and a rest from the turmoils of the sea—for the captain had informed them that if the weather should continue favorable as it then was, he hoped to be in harbor on the morrow.

The young ladies were seated beside their father and near to Henry, and a very lively strain of conversation had been kept up for some time; when Louise made a remark upon the absence of Evart, and Caroline replied,

"He seems to be enjoying his own thoughts all alone by himself."

"I fear," said Louise, "that Evart is not well. I have noticed for this day or two that he appears dull, and disposed to keep by himself."

Henry immediately arose and walked towards the bow of the vessel, where Evart was seated, and putting his hand upon his shoulder stooped and said,

"Why so alone?"

"Better alone than to be where your company is not agreeable."

The answer was so surprising to Henry, that for a moment he knew not what to say, and stood silently looking at his friend.

"I cannot comprehend your meaning, Evart! Have I done aught that has given you offence? Tell me, dear Evart!"

"I cannot tell you now."

"Why not now? This moment! Evart, I am innocent as the babe unborn, of any thought that could injure or pain your feelings! There must be some great misunderstanding—believe me! I could wish you knew every thought or feeling I have in reference to you!"

Evart felt the flush of shame that was tinging his own cheek. Already he began to relent. Henry's kind voice—his earnest

expressions—his troubled look—told upon the heart that had so long been purely his.

"I cannot explain now, Henry; we must be alone. It will take some time; perhaps I am wrong; I have been unhappy; miserable. When we get to land you shall know all."

"And would you keep me in suspense and misery so long? We are now alone, Evart—I cannot return to the society of your relations under present circumstances! If I am to be a stranger to you, I must be so to them. If I am not worthy of your friendship I surely will not court theirs!"

There was a terrible struggle in the heart of Evart, but the most disturbing element was shame!

He had allowed unhallowed passions to gain the ascendency; he began to see his folly; his want of manliness; his want of Christian charity. He felt that he had allowed the natural man to triumph; he was mortified and humbled. A few moments he sat writhing under the stings of conscience. At length he said,

"Sit down by me, Henry; I have been very unhappy, and I now feel that it has been all my own fault. I could wish everything I have said might be forgotten, and that I might have your confidence without being compelled to make an explanation. But as this has been the first shadow upon our friendship, at least in my heart, and as I feel that our relation to each other is too sacred to be subject to such disturbances, I shall unburden my mind to you.

"You must pity and forgive; but never—never again shall a feeling possess my breast that shall be hidden from you; sit down."

It was a severe ordeal, but Evart had resolution enough and candor enough to lay open to his friend the whole matter. It was indeed an act of penance—but he knew with whom he was dealing, and when he closed, the warm grasp of Henry's hand assured him that not a spot remained to sully their honest and pure feelings towards each other.

"You have been open and generous with me, Evart, and now my heart tells me that your candor demands from me a clearing up of whatever obscurity may rest upon the free knowledge of each other's feelings, so far as I am concerned. I must now tell you *my* story."

And with as much sincerity as if he had been unveiling his

heart for his own inspection, he brought to the ear of his friend all he had ever felt and all he had suffered from the same cause, and then closed with saying—

"I have long looked upon Louise as yours, and what you have told me fills me with surprise. You think, then, she is really engaged?"

"I feel very sure that her affections are; and I am convinced that Louise has but one heart to give: she has ardent feelings, under strong control. On whom her heart rests, I know not; she has been surrounded by admirers. I know some of them to be fine fellows, men of superior attainments, with whom I cannot pretend to compete. But let that go—the storm is over, I am at rest now! Yes, Henry, I believe I should rejoice to know that Louise loves you; I am sure I should. I believe you to be worthy of her."

"I have told you, Evart, the whole truth; I can never now aspire to her hand; our positions in life are too dissimilar. Louise Marston is a very different person from Louise Lovelace. No, Evart, all I shall think of is a place in her kind regards. She has a noble heart, and I hope may yield it only to one who may be worthy of such a treasure.

"I thank you, Evart, for the test you have given me of your sincere affection. Hereafter let the bond which unites us be more strong and sacred than ever. I feel it will be so, that is, if the most perfect confidence on my part, and the most open expression of every feeling of my heart to you can make it so.

"And now, come, put on a cheerful face, and let us join our friends; they will wonder at our long conference, and perhaps be rallying us for want of courtesy."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"THERE is Belden! Look, Henry."

"I see him. Do you suppose he is expecting us?"

"He is expecting some one. How restless he is; he cannot keep in one position for a minute at a time; his hat is off—he sees me."

And Evart immediately raised his hat and waved it gently, when the gentleman who has been already named, and who was standing on the wharf awaiting the slow approach of the brig to her moorings, at once commenced whirling his hat round his head at a furious rate, apparently unconscious that any spectators were about him.

"I wonder if he will recognize me?"

"I think so; but he does not yet, for he is looking wildly over the brig."

Mr. Belden and Mr. Blenham having heard that the brig Boxer, from Bermuda, was coming up the Bay, had both hurried to her landing-place, in expectation of meeting their friends: the former gentleman, however, was the only one of the two they had distinguished among the crowd.

Henry raised his hand; the vessel was now but a few rods from the wharf. Mr. Belden paused, gave one earnest look, put up both hands, clapped them together, jumped into the brig's boat that was just returning after having carried the end of a hawser to the dock, and in a few minutes, with the agility of a sailor, was up the main chains and on the deck.

Evart was the first to meet him, for Henry's movements had yet of necessity to be moderate. He was gaining strength—he had gained much already—but there was still need of care.

Evart returned a hearty shake with both hands—not a word was spoken. Belden's eye was on Henry; he had to look up to him now; it was not the Henry he had parted with six years ago, but the old smile he remembered. Silently they pressed each other's hands, as they had done

when they parted; neither could have spoken if they had thus wished to express their feelings. But words were not needed; each felt the happiness of the moment. Mr. Belden, however, had some painful anxiety mingled with his joy; he did not intend to show it, and when he did begin to utter words, they were encouraging and hopeful, at least designed to be so."

"Glad, glad, glad you've got here! Native air soon set things right. You haven't eaten, I suppose? Sea-sick; great preparations at home; dinner all ready; been looking-out these two hours; brig moves slow. Here, take my arm; walk slowly, no hurry now; carriage ready. Pah! bilge water! Don't wonder you look so."

"Henry Thornton, my good fellow, how are you?"

Mr. Belden, as Henry removed his arm to give his hand to Mr. Blenham, who had just come on board, immediately caught it again, and appeared to be very anxiously endeavoring to hold him up; he felt that Henry needed support.

"Oh, sir," in reply to Mr. Blenham's salutations, "I am better, much better; I begin to feel quite strong."

Mr. Belden winked to Evart, who with Captain Marston and the ladies was shaking hands with Mr. Blenham.

"That's the old tune—he is always better; he will say so when there aint but two breaths left. You take the other arm, and we will help him along—softly!"

"Oh, but he is really better, Mr. Belden; he is quite strong to what he has been."

"Any appetite?"

"Oh, yes, quite good."

"Don't look so. Dinner all ready—roast beef, fish, lobsters, port wine, Madeira, London porter, all on hand. Pah! bilge water! let us get ashore quick as possible; a plank, he cannot jump down the brig's side."

All this was said in a half whisper to Evart, while Henry was busily engaged in answering questions from his friend Blenham, and appealing to Captain Marston for confirmation of what he said, "that he was much better."

"Yes, he is better, Blenham; but we must still have a care of him. You will probably wish to be together for a few days, but as soon as he can be spared, I must insist upon his coming up to our place in the country; Mrs. Marston will

nurse him, and our air will brace him up; he wants rest."

"And he shall have it; but you will all go home with me. We heard of your arrival at the Hook this morning, and Belden, who is my purveyor, has ordered a little of everything, I believe. You will all come?"

It was decided, however, that Captain Marston and Evart would be there, the ladies preferring to remain at their aunt's.

It was some weeks before Henry could make up his mind to leave for the country; and, in fact, he gained so rapidly that he began to think any such change would not be necessary; but, as he had promised to go, and as Mr. Blenham insisted upon it, he himself engaging to follow him there in a few days, Mr. Blenham seeming, for some reason, quite willing to go there. Henry yielded to the request.

Evart was to accompany Henry, and to take his own horse and gig, and they were to visit the old mill at Maple Cove, and the spot where they two first met. Much pleasure was anticipated, especially by Evart: to Henry the journey offered, indeed, some qualifying prospects, but he almost dreaded to revisit places where past scenes would be vividly recalled.

As Evart and Henry were seated in the gig and about to start, Mr. Belden just held on to them a moment—he had some last words to say.

"You promise me, now, you will just stop at the old homestead, and see how they look up there, and tell the folks who you are, you know. Stone house, large trees, in sight of the mill; brook runs by the door. And tell them, you know, all hearty here; chirp, doing well; be there, course of the summer."

"Then you have let out your house, Mr. Belden?"

"No, not exactly; no matter how it is; you see, I've told you all about it, haven't I?"

"You have told me," said Henry, "that you have paid your mortgage off, and I was heartily rejoiced to hear it."

"No doubt of that. Yes, thanks to you, she's clear now."

"Not to me, Mr. Belden."

"Hold your tongue, sir. I say to you in the first place, for, if it hadn't been for your getting me here, when would it have been done?"

"But, you see, it's all paid, and I've been up there and walked all about it and across it every which way, and shook hands with the old trees, or shook the branches, which is the same thing. 'You are mine now,' says I, 'old fellows; we'll stick together, I guess, after this; nobody shall have a right to claim you while Joe Belden stands on his legs above ground.' There, that's all!"

"But about the people in the house, Mr. Belden?"

"People! there's only two of them—clever folks. You see, the old lady is an old acquaintance, that's all."

"But you have only described one; you spoke of two."

"Two! so there are. You see, I found the house wanted care—rats, spiders, ants, mice and mildew playing old hog; cleaned her out, painted, papered, whitewashed, all snug.

"Some friends had back luck; husband dies, father dies, widow alone, daughter alone—clever, very; wanted a home; put them in to keep the rats out, and kill the spiders, and air the house. You may laugh, boys; it does me good to see that fellow laugh. I thought when I first saw him on the brig the old pigtails had done for him.

"You see, I've changed my mind; begin to feel lonesome, drat it!—I don't care if I do tell you two; won't mention it?"

"Not a word, Mr. Belden."

"Upon honor?"

"Upon honor."

"Well, you see, I am getting a little forehanded; world looks brighter; debts all paid; heart lighter—now I shan't; you're laughing again!"

"You have married, Mr. Belden?"

"Not a bit of it! She's young—wait a year or two, no hurry; can't leave yet. But just make a call there, boys, and see how you like things."

And giving them a hearty shake of the hand, Mr. Belden hastened back to his desk, and they went on their way.

It was about the middle of the day when they left the city. Evart did not drive fast, as they had no idea of reaching Glencove that night, and the weather was warm; and towards the middle of the afternoon heavy clouds began to gather up in the west, giving tokens of rain. The young men were too busily engaged in conversation on various sub-

jects of interest to pay much heed to what was going on in the clouds, and it was not until a severe clap of thunder, and a roaring of wind in the distance obtruded upon their notice, that they took cognizance of the fact that a shower was very near at hand.

The horse which Evart drove was a great favorite with him, and although he had travelled moderately, yet the beast, unaccustomed to the road of late, had worked himself into a complete lather, and the idea at once occurred to his master that a cold water bath under such circumstances was not desirable, if it could be avoided; and, although Henry laughed at the notion, yet Evart insisted upon it if a shelter was to be had, he, Henry, must not be exposed to the storm.

"I see," said Evart, "that cloud is coming fast; we shall not reach the village, drive as we may. Yonder is a schoolhouse, and there is a wood shed attached to it, under which I could drive Charlie. What do you say, Henry?"

"It is immaterial to me; the rain will not hurt us, but if you wish to shelter your horse, perhaps you had better drive up; you must be quick though."

In a moment more they were at the door, and, as Evart jumped out and entered the room, a young lady approached, neatly dressed, and saluted him in such an easy, agreeable manner as at once surprised and pleased him.

"I hope, miss, you will excuse this intrusion. I came in to ask the favor of a shelter, as my friend, who is in company with me, is not quite well enough to be exposed to the storm."

"No intrusion, I assure you, sir; both myself and scholars will be delighted to have a little company. It looks very threatening. You will be able to drive your horse under the shed, I think, even if you cannot get your gig under."

And she smiled so sweetly as she said this, and her appearance and manner were so different from what he had expected in a "country school madam" that for the moment he seemed to forget about his friend, and his horse, and the storm, too.

A sudden clap of thunder, however, started him out of his reverie—he sprang to the door.

"Quick, Henry, it is on us."

Henry alighted, and, walking in, was met and welcomed by the lady. He bowed in his best manner, and fixed his

eye with great earnestness upon her. Just then some of the children becoming alarmed, as a cloud of dust was sweeping towards the building, and the trees began to bend under the furious blast, ran up to their teacher, exclaiming—

"Oh, Miss Thompson, Miss Thompson! what shall we do?"

Henry, with his pleasant smile and cheering words, seconded the lady's attempts to quiet their fears, and soon they smiled in return, and many of them took their seats, saying, "*they* were not afraid," while a few clung closely to their teacher, as though their safety was insured while near to her, and one or two took the hands of the stranger gentleman, who had happened in so opportunely.

Amid the confusion, however, Henry could not keep his eye from the lady, and in a few moments he stepped up to her.

"Am I mistaken, or is this not Miss Emma Thompson?"

"My name is Emma, sir."

A slight flush spread over her face as the lady made this reply.

"From Stratton?"

"Yes, sir; I am a daughter of the late Esquire Thompson, of Stratton."

"And you once knew Henry Thornton?"

"Oh, certainly—but, can it be?"

A tide of recollections seemed at once to flow into her mind; her countenance assumed a very serious cast, and tears started to her eyes.

Henry put out his hand, which she took, saying, with much emotion—

"Time makes great changes."

Before Henry could reply, Evart entered, and seemed much astonished at witnessing the two strangers thus embracing, and especially at beholding the emotion of the lady.

"Allow me, Miss Thompson, to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Evart Marston."

Evart was very particular in making his obeisance to the lady, more so than usual; and Henry noticed that Evart had more color on the occasion than was natural to one so accustomed to the society of ladies.

The storm, although violent at its outbreak, was of short duration; long before all the questions could be put and an-

swered between Miss Emma and Henry. He learned that her father had died about two years since, and also some few items of news concerning persons in Stratton.

As the sun came out, and the scholars were preparing to leave, Miss Emma arose, and, giving her hand to Henry—

"It would give me great pleasure to see you at my boarding-house this evening, unless you conclude to extend your ride beyond our place."

Henry looked at Evart for a reply.

"I think," said the latter, very promptly, "that we had better not extend our ride beyond the village; you have had exercise enough for one day."

"Just as you say. I shall be very happy, then, Miss Emma, to spend some time with you this evening."

The young lady then began to give some directions whereby he could find her place of residence, when Evart interposed.

"If Miss Thompson will accept a seat in my carriage, I shall be very happy to drive her home, and that will be a sure way of teaching me the locality, and then I can escort you there after supper. I presume it is not so distant but you will be willing to wait here until I return?"

Miss Emma was about to make some objections, but Henry united with his friend in advocating the arrangement, and in a few moments Evart was assisting the young schoolmistress to mount his gig, with an earnestness of manner that somewhat surprised Henry.

"Well," said Evart, as Henry was taking his seat beside him after the return of the former from escorting the lady, "we are always learning something. I have had my views corrected about a class of persons which I have been brought up to look down upon—why, she is a perfect lady!"

"Why should she not be?"

"No reason that I know of, only I have always classed your New England schoolmistresses with persons who have had scarcely any advantages; good scholars, perhaps, so far as they have gone, but without accomplishments—in fact, rather awkward, and with minds a little blue."

"It is well, then, that you have changed your opinion, for, although you may not find every young lady from the land of teachers, who may be in a district school, equal to Miss

Thompson, as she has had superior advantages both at home and abroad, yet teaching is with us a respectable calling; no young lady who feels inclined to engage in it has any idea that she degrades herself thereby, no matter how high the standing of her family."

"Would it be proper for me to accompany you this evening? she gave me an invitation."

"By all means: that, you know, was the basis of your proposition in offering to conduct her home, that you might be able to pilot me there."

"So it was; I came near forgetting that—in fact, it did not occur to me once on the way, but I think I shall be able to find the place."

The lady had certainly awakened the curiosity of our young friend, and on their way to the town and during supper, he had many questions to ask concerning her, some of which Henry could answer, but more of them were about matters of which he knew nothing, not having seen or heard of her or her family for more than six years.

The evening had passed, and it was a much later hour than Henry had been in the habit of keeping for some time past. Whether Evart had spent it pleasantly, he knew not; he himself had heard tidings which caused him to be absorbed in deep thought, and as they rode home the silence would not, in all probability, have been broken, if Evart had not first spoke.

"Henry, I must say that I never felt so before in my life."

At once alarmed, as well as greatly surprised, for he had not before received the least intimation that his friend was not in perfect health, Henry laid his hand upon Evart, and asked, in an earnest manner—

"What is it, Evart? How *do* you feel?"

"Oh, you have misunderstood me; I am well enough in body, perfectly well; but I never felt before as I have done this evening, and, indeed, ever since I met that young lady in the school-house."

Henry felt disposed to smile at his own mistake, and would no doubt have indulged a hearty laugh, had he not been assured by Evart's manner that *he* was in no merry mood.

"You have been pleased with her?"

"More than that. I have seen many ladies, as you know; many much more beautiful—Louise is much handsomer; I thought I loved *her*, and so I did and do now, but I never was in company with one who has taken just such a hold of my heart. I cannot tell you why, but so it is. I suppose you will think me very susceptible, and given to change, but I tell you everything."

"I think nothing of you, Evart, but what is true and honorable, and, as you know my views of such matters, you need not fear that I shall attribute your present feelings to a freak of fancy. That you should love Emma Thompson would not appear very strange to me, who believe her to be most worthy of the love of so pure a heart as yours. That you should be so decided in your feelings from so short an acquaintance, is, you also know, in perfect accordance with my theory about such matters. I must tell you, also, that she has risen vastly in my estimation from what I have learned this evening. She is not keeping school, as I at first supposed, merely to gratify a feeling so common with New England ladies, of having something useful to do; it is earnest work with her. She is laboring away from home in order to help support those who are dear to her, and not so well able to go abroad themselves."

"You told me the family was wealthy, or at least esteemed so in the country."

"So I thought, but time has made great changes; her father has died, his affairs were much involved; they are quite reduced."

"Oh, I am so glad! No, pardon me, Henry, I am not glad for their misfortunes, but what a pleasure it would be, could I but gain her heart, to be able to lift her up again—and all her family with her, I should rejoice a hundred fold more than if she had ever so much money at her command."

"I know you would. Well, strange things occur; your meeting was certainly a very unexpected event, your mind had not been prejudiced by anything you had previously heard. I do not wonder at your feelings, she is certainly a lovely girl, lovely in her appearance, and much more so in those qualities of mind and heart which, after all, bind us so strongly. I must go to Stratton immediately, that is, in a day or two; I have received, through Miss Emma, some in-

formation concerning matters there in which, perhaps, I can be of great service to her family; and what I *can* do for those who befriended me in my boyhood, as *they* did, I certainly will do, if it takes all I am worth."

"Henry, let me have a hand in it! Tell me all about it; do, now."

"No, no, Evart, I feel that I owe a debt which belongs to me to pay. It would not be proper under present circumstances, it would look too much like attempting to purchase the daughter's hand, and might prove a severe trial to you and Miss Emma too. Personal obligations such as I am under to that family cannot be thrown off upon another.

"That shower which drove us into the school-house is like to prove, so far as I can see, the beginning of some important events. I have told you some things connected with my early intimacy in that family, how I became acquainted, and how kindly I was always treated, but I feel every year I live and witness the unfolding of providential events, more and more the obligations I am under for the treatment I received there. It was a great thing for me to be admitted into a circle where all was harmony and love and refined behavior. My ambition was excited, and dreams of what I might accomplish in future began to be indulged, a higher life than that which was manifested in my own home was unfolded, and my heart began to pant for it. There, too, I began to love Louise, and although, as you know, I have given up all hope in reference to her, yet no time or circumstances will ever tear her image from its place in my heart; she must ever be my Louise—the young angel whose radiance cheered my heart when every circumstance about my path conspired to make the way dark and forbidding.

"I would not part, Evart, with some scenes in my days of boyhood, with some of the pleasant dreams which then enchanted me, for any anticipated happiness now. And all this and much more I owe to the kindness of that family."

They did not leave the place very early the next morning, for Evart had begged the privilege of conveying Miss Thompson to her school, and he must have taken the longest road there, so Henry thought, from the time it took, but he made no remark to that effect, and was quite willing to wait Evart's motions, as the whole day was before them. It made

a late start, however, and the dwelling of Captain Marston did not come in sight until the middle of the afternoon. As they approached this spot, so full of interest to Henry, he had much to think of. The past came fresh to his mind; his weary travel on the day that first brought him there, his lonely condition, his anxieties and fears, his meeting with the gentleman at the gate, his kind reception at the house, the scenes through which he had since passed, and his present prospects. "Surely his short life had been varied with trial and success;" and although the present was full of brightness, so far as concerned his future independence, yet he could not say he was so happy now as then.

Just before reaching the gate, a party on horseback was seen coming through the beautiful avenue: these were a lady and two gentlemen.

"There is Louise," said Evart; "I can tell by the easy manner in which she manages her horse, a gay steed he is, too. She rides better than her attendants."

Henry made no reply, his heart was too sad just then. One of the gentlemen sprang from his saddle to open the gate, and at that moment Evart and Henry drove up.

Louise rode close to the gig, and gave her hand to her cousin, who was nearest to her; and would no doubt have extended the same favor to Henry, but, as he merely bowed and raised his hat, she in return bowed to him, but with a pleasant smile upon her face, and at once asked kindly after his health.

"It is improving fast; I am much better, I thank you."

"I should not have judged so from your appearance; you are so pale, paler than when we landed in New York."

Henry was, indeed, as pale as he could well be, considering his complexion had been so thoroughly bronzed. He made a reply, but it was unheard by Louise, for her attention was just then arrested by the efforts of the gentleman to mount his horse, the latter being restive, and his rider apparently not accustomed to getting into the saddle "under difficulties."

It was at length accomplished, however, and, without any introduction of the gentlemen on either side, the party on horseback rode off, laughing and talking in a very lively manner, and Henry and Evart drove up to the mansion.

Nothing could have been more hearty than the reception

which Henry met from Mrs. Marston and every member of the family. He was, indeed, made to feel that at last he had reached home. But all *that* "availed him nothing;" the scene at the gate had spoiled what happiness he might have enjoyed; his mind was not just then under its best influences. And when permitted to retire to his room, although one of the most eligible sleeping apartments in the house, and everything at his command that luxury could ask, he sat down moody and discontented, and even regretting that he had felt it necessary to come there at all. Thus it is that the best of us have to learn how dangerous for our peace to allow that supremacy to any earthly object which belongs alone to God. Sooner or later it proves a thorn in the flesh, goading us into evil passions, if it does not humble us for our idolatry.

How much happier was the boy Henry when in the midst of a furious tempest, a stranger just sheltered beneath that same roof, than Mr. Henry Thornton, the young man with bright prospects and warm and wealthy friends, who seemed to vie with each other in administering to his comfort.

Henry spent much more of his time that evening with Captain Marston in his office, than was necessary for any business arrangements he had to make. And when obliged to mingle with the family circle in the parlor, although treated with much courtesy by all present, yet the forced pleasantness of manner he was obliged to put on, was so irksome to him, that under a plea of fatigue, and the necessity of rest preparatory to his next day's travel, his kind hostess allowed him to retire at an early hour.

Very different was the state of things with Evart. Louise was now to him only his fair, agreeable cousin. He watched indeed every opportunity to commune with her, but merely for a purpose of his own. First he had to let her know that he wished to make a confidant of her, and when she agreed to place herself in that position, she found that her cousin Evart wanted particular information concerning a young lady about whom Louise might be supposed well informed. And the questions Evart put, led her to the conclusion that either Evart or some friend for whom he was most interested, had motives for the inquiries he was making, of a very delicate nature. So, after Louise had said all she knew in reference to the lady in question, she closed as follows:

"I suppose I may construe your apparent interest in Miss Emma Thompson as I please; you have put your queries in a form that might lead me to suppose, cousin Evart, if I chose to do so, that you wish the information for yourself, although ostensibly for the benefit of a friend; but I shall not so interpret your design. You may therefore tell your friend, that I know Miss Emma to be as lovely in the qualities of her heart, as she is engaging in personal appearance."

Evart was highly pleased to think that he had been able to get the true opinion of his cousin, without exposing to her his own personal feelings.

He had some scruples of delicacy, after all his professions to Louise, at exposing to her the true state of the case. Little did he think that he was inflicting a severe wound upon her heart, who had answered his questions with apparent readiness and, as he doubted not, with perfect sincerity.

Louise had that evening been surrounded with those who paid her the most flattering attentions. Some of them her heart despised, for she was confident that they were but the bait thrown out to catch a golden prize. That all who courted her favor had such a base end in view she did not believe; and one among the number, she knew, was worthy of her love, if she could yield it to him, and it gave her real pain that his suit must be denied. This among other matters troubled her, and when she retired for the night to her own apartment, and sat down by the table where her Bible lay, she opened to a passage often read in secret by her, cast her eye upon it, and then leaned down her head and wept.

Early in the morning Evart and Henry were off, and both happy in the prospect of soon seeing their old and valued friend, Mr. Vernon, who was making his annual visit to the country.

To him Henry intended to communicate what information he had received respecting the affairs of the Thompson family, and to be guided by his advice as to the best way of proceeding.

When they reached the precincts of Stratton, and were directing their course to the old farmhouse where Mr. Vernon had formerly resided, they descried a carriage on the road they were travelling, and about to meet them.

"There is Vernon's carriage, if I am not mistaken," said Evart; "we shall know in a moment."

As the vehicles approached each other and were on the point of turning out, Evart raised his hand and smiled; the coachman raised his hat in return and stopped his horses. Immediately a gentleman looked out to see what might be the difficulty, when Evart springing from the gig with the alacrity of a boy, was most cordially greeted by his much loved friend.

Henry was more moderate in his movements, and before he could reach the carriage Mr. Vernon himself had alighted. He fairly grasped Henry in his arms, and his eye sparkled with emotion which the sight of this young man had awakened, and keeping fast hold of his arm, insisted upon his getting into his own carriage, and that Evart must drive to the tavern where they would soon meet him.

It was indeed a marked change in the life of Henry. When last he saw Mr. Vernon in this place, Henry had looked up to him as a wealthy city gentleman, who came to the country yearly with his coach and horses, and was treated with great consideration by all who were fortunate enough to be on terms of acquaintance with him. The little boy had often noticed his neat establishment as it passed by the field where he was working, and thought how far, how very far, its owner was lifted up above the station he occupied, or could ever hope to reach. *Now*, in that same place, this gentleman has met him as he might a younger brother returned after a long absence, and in that same carriage he is seated an equal, or treated as such by the great and good man.

As Henry had come upon business that required dispatch, he lost no time in making known his errand, and found that Mr. Vernon was then on his way to see the very gentleman whom Henry must of necessity see, in order to obtain a full understanding of the case in which he was so deeply interested.

"I am on my way to the office of Mr. Rice on business of my own. It is of small moment, though, and I shall not enter upon it at present. And as I comprehend your errand, perhaps you may as well let me be the speaker on the occasion."

"By all means, sir; I shall be glad to leave the management of the business entirely with your discretion."

"I know Squire Rice well; he is a sharp lawyer, but a very honorable high-minded man; above all those little arts which disgrace some who belong to that noble profession. He is highly esteemed in this place, and wherever he is known. His appearance is not prepossessing, nor his manners very courteous; but no one who is acquainted with him ever takes offence at his bluntness, except those who happen to come under his rebuke for meanness or duplicity."

On entering the office, Henry glanced his eye at the gentleman, who was seated at a small desk engaged in writing. His countenance was indeed not very comely; there was a scowl on his brow, and the deep lines about his mouth gave an expression of sternness, if not ill humor.

"Sit down, gentlemen."

That was all the notice he took of his visitors, and his pen kept on with its rapid motion for some minutes. At length, with much moderation, he folded his paper, placed it carefully under cover of a portfolio that lay by him, and removing his spectacles up to a position on his forehead, arose and advanced towards the two gentlemen, and without speaking gave his hand to Mr. Vernon and then to his young companion, whom Mr. Vernon did not even introduce by name. He then resumed his seat and sat looking first at one and then at the other, as much as to say, "Gentlemen, I am now ready to hear your story."

"Esquire Rice, I have called to talk with you a little about the property of the widow Thompson, which I have just heard is to be sold on the morrow."

"Well, sir, what have you to say?"

"Is it positively to be sold?"

"Positively."

"Have you any objections, Squire Rice, to let me know a little how matters stand with reference to it—what are its incumbrances? I believe you are the assignee."

"None in the least, I am the assignee. In the first place, there is a mortgage on the property for four thousand dollars, and then there are outside claims on it and the furniture for two thousand more, or about that amount—something less, say eighteen hundred dollars."

"What will it probably sell for?"

"Cannot say, sir. You know, Mr. Vernon, as well as I can

tell you, that the present is no time to sell property; money cannot be had on any security; no one has any. The property must be dreadfully sacrificed. Why, sir, there are one hundred and fifty acres, with a noble house, and everything, barns and all, in complete order; land rich; eighty acres of the property in wood, the finest wood land in this region; the wood itself is worth this moment more money than the whole one hundred and fifty acres will sell for. It is a bad business, sir—a shocking business, sir—but my hands are tied; no redress—must be sold for what it will bring."

"Cannot the creditors be induced to wait? This state of things cannot last; money will be more plenty in a few months."

"Some of them would wait, no doubt, sir; some of them are men with souls in their bodies, but the trouble is here, sir. The principal mortgage is held by a man who, I suppose, is expecting to purchase the place himself—a close-fisted, hard-hearted, grinding man; you know the fellow—I won't call him a man—Joe Langstaff!"

Henry started, and the color came to his face as it had not for many months, but he said nothing.

"Mr. Langstaff! I did not suppose he had money at interest."

"By right, sir, I believe he ought not to have, but right does not always obtain in this world.

"Mr. Langstaff, you know—or, perhaps, you do not know it—married an excellent lady, as I have been told, a widow, the widow Thornton. It was a strange match, the wonder of every one, but so it was; she died, as I hear, of a broken heart, and I believe it, for, if she was treated as represented to me, it was enough to have put any sensitive woman in her grave. She had property, no one knows how much, but many think, and, indeed, I have reason to know from some circumstances which I have learned of late, that it was quite a snug little sum. This by right ought to have gone to her child, an only son; a fine, spirited little fellow, they say he was; but the lad took offence, and justly too, at the treatment of his mother—that is the story—and went off without a cent, not even waiting to see her buried, and nobody knows where he is, or whether dead or alive. And Langstaff, if he does know, keeps it to himself.

"This four thousand dollars belongs, in justice, to that boy. But that is not the question now: Mr. Laugstaff has a claim on this property, and he has forced matters to a settlement, and I know that he means to purchase the place as cheap as he can, and, if he can scrape together a thousand dollars beyond what he has a mortgage for, he will get the place!"

"You think, then, it will not bring over five thousand dollars?"

"I fear not, sir. It is not one-half its value, no, nor one-third its value, but we cannot help it."

"What will the other creditors do?"

"Take the furniture, strip the house, stock and all! It has made me almost sick, Mr. Vernon. Lawyers are not supposed to be troubled very much with tender sensibilities, and seeing what we do of the rascality of mankind, it is not strange if we should get a little hardened; but some of us have got a little human nature still left. And to see that fine lady and her fine son and lovely daughters driven out, houseless and homeless, is enough to stir up a man's bile, and make him mad with the world. Why, Mr. Vernon, it would make your heart ache to know how that little fellow her son feels. Charlie is a fine boy, a noble boy, of great resolution and energy; he has almost by his own labor supported the family the past year; he works early and late, never seems to tire; and he told me last week if he could only contrive to get the house released, and a few acres of land around it, just to make a home for his mother and sisters, it would be all he would ask. He could take care of them, he knew he could; and, sir, the tears rolled down his cheeks like rain, when I told him that I had tried to accomplish such a thing, but it could not be done."

"Are there no other debts against the estate than those you have mentioned?"

"Not a dollar, sir."

"Esquire Rice, there are many strange things taking place in this world; you and I have lived long enough to witness not a few—I have no doubt you have; but what I am about to say to you will be as surprising as anything we have been cognizant of hitherto.

"This young gentleman who sits beside me was, but a few years since, a boy from this place; he was taken much notice

of by Mrs. Thompson and her family, treated kindly as a gentleman—and to which rank he had perhaps some claim; he became attached to them, and feels that to them he is under special obligations.

"He has made his own way in life since then; he has not seen the family for some years, but has accidentally learned their present condition; he has realized a few thousand dollars, and he is over here now, unbeknown to any one but myself, for the purpose of doing what he can to prevent this sacrifice of property and this trial of feeling.

"He can go to the extent of six thousand dollars, and that sum will be at your disposal, if you think it will be sufficient?"

"You may say eight thousand, Mr. Vernon; I cannot see that family driven from their home, sir, if it takes all I am worth?"

Mr. Rice arose, and, walking up to Henry, grasped his hand.

"I do not know your name, young man, Mr. Vernon did not give it, but, thank God, I feel I am grasping the hand of one who does not need a name to warm my heart towards him. And mark my words, my young friend, He who keeps a special watch over the widow and the fatherless, will not suffer your grey hairs to go down in sorrow to the grave. I had rather have your heart than all the gold that can be piled in the biggest vault that miser ever owned! May God bless you!"

"And now," said Mr. Vernon, "I will introduce my young friend to you, Esquire Rice. That little son of the widow Thornton, of whom you have heard, and whose story you have told so truly, and this young gentleman, are the same person. Allow me to present to you my dear young friend, Mr. Henry Thornton."

Henry had risen, and still held the hand of Esquire Rice. Each looked at the other a moment in silence, for both were highly excited. The latter was the first to speak.

"It would have been a sufficient recommendation, Mr. Thornton, to be named by Mr. Vernon as his dear friend, but the revelation he has made of your noble purpose is, indeed, a proof that you are worthy of the title. I am most happy to know you and I assure you, sir, nothing shall be wanting on

my part to carry out your design. And now, let us to business."

The arrangements for the morrow were soon made. Mr. Vernon and Henry were to attend the sale, and Henry was to be the bidder; Mr. Rice, of course, would be there, but not to be known as at all acquainted with their plans.

"You wish, you say, Mr. Thornton, to have the debts covered by the bid?"

"I do, sir."

"Mr. Langstaff may be disposed, and he may possibly be able, to give more for the place than I have supposed; he is, I know, very anxious to get it. He may have made some arrangement with the other creditors by which he can afford to make a large bid, we cannot say; but perhaps you had better bid boldly at the first, letting him make the start. With all my heart I wish you may succeed, it will be the happiest hour I have seen for many a day."

"The fact is, sir, there are hearts here that are willing, but the means are not to be had.

Some time was now spent by the three gentlemen in examining papers in reference to Henry's personal rights, and such conclusions were soon arrived at as gave Esquire Rice, by Henry's orders, some extra business, which was to be attended to without delay, and which might possibly turn the scale against the unmerciful and overbearing.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a very still house at the widow Thompson's that morning. Sadness sat upon each brow, for it was to be the last day in which they could feel that the house where for so many years they had sheltered was their own.

This they had been expecting for some time; but to-day the deed was to be consummated that would deprive them, in the space of a few hours, of any right to tread beneath its roof.

"A new master would open their doors without leave of them, and walk through their spacious hall and into their most private rooms—and look abroad from their terraced walks upon the fruits and flowers which their hands had reared, and call them his! And he would go through their gates which opened into the rich fields around the dwelling—spotted with noble trees, under whose shadows they all had rested, and beheld the mowers—their own mowers—laying the heavy swaths in even rows. And these would be all his! And the thick woods, beyond those fields, where their own choppers had wielded the axe and gathered their winter's fuel; and where, in golden autumn, they had walked among the rustling leaves and gathered their store of nuts. And all these would be his!" And how could they but be sad.

Mrs. Thompson had endeavored to keep up the cheer in the children's hearts until that morning. It was the funeral day of all their past joys in the old homestead, and they felt it to be such. All spoke in low tones, and even their step through the old, long loved rooms was with care—as if death had come under their roof and his trophy was being prepared for the grave.

The two daughters at home, Jane and Carrie, tried, indeed, at times, to scatter the gloom which seemed to pervade the house, by commencing some favorite tune; but neither of them could finish what they had began—if nothing else, the step of Charlie, heard approaching, at once would hush all music in their hearts or on their lips.

Charlie was now sixteen, and large for his age; he was most tenderly attached to his mother and sisters; he was peculiarly fond of his home—he and his sisters had been born there; he knew better than they the value of the property; he had ascertained during the past year as never before, how much could be reared from it without much extra expense for labor, and he felt assured if it could but be spared a few years longer, the whole debt might be paid by disposing of wood land which they did not need; he had conversed with neighbors and disinterested persons, and they all agreed with him in that opinion; and when he found there was no hope of saving the farm, he had then tried if possible to secure the house and adjoining lot, but in this too he had failed.

And this morning, for the first time, Charlie yielded up all hope, and his irresolute step and down-cast eye revealed to those who loved him that he had given up all for lost. His mother had tried to say some comforting words, but he knew well enough that it was only an effort on her part to revive his spirits; she could not herself see how they were to be sustained.

The hour of nine had struck. At ten o'clock the sale was to take place; Charlie seized his hat and was going from the house.

"You are not going to the tavern, my son?"

"Yes, mother."

"And why, Charlie? It will only distress your feelings—to hear the old place bid upon and to listen to the light remarks which unfeeling people, or thoughtless people, are apt to make on such occasions. I think, my dear son, I would not go."

"Mother, I wish to make one more trial. Mr. Rice has been to Mr. Langstaff and endeavored to get him to release the house and the house lot. He assured Mr. Langstaff that the rest would more than pay; but he refused Mr. Rice. I think if I go and tell him how we are situated, he may be persuaded, perhaps, to put off the sale."

"I fear, Charlie, you will not succeed. Mr. Langstaff wants the house for his own use; his son, I hear, is to have the one the family now occupy. Mr. Langstaff has said, as I hear, that before the sun sets to-day, 'this property will be his.' I am afraid you will only get your feelings injured."

"Mother, let me try?"

"Well, my son, if you will feel better satisfied I cannot say no to you; but do not stay through the sale; when you have done all you can, come away—come home."

"Home! oh, mother, you forget!"

And without saying anything further he went on his way to the tavern.

As it was generally known through the town that a sale of the Thompson property was to take place that day at the Cross Keys tavern, quite a number of persons were collected; although not so many as if the sale had been of a kind that all could have a chance to purchase something; very few attended as bidders, so that, besides those immediately interested as neighbors, most present came to gratify curiosity.

Mr. Langstaff was there in good season; he was to be the great man of the day, and wished to be in time to enjoy the pleasure of being questioned about the affair, and giving his reasons for having brought matters to a close, and winding up as he called it "a rotten concern."

Mr. Langstaff was dressed in his Sunday suit—he had his best harness upon his horse, and his wagon had been washed for the occasion. With Mr. Langstaff came two of his sons; the eldest as large as himself, with a coarse, stern look. It was said that the old man would be right glad when he and his son, who was about to be married, could have separate establishments—there was little peace between them. The younger son was a dull looking youth of about eighteen. They all seemed to be in fine spirits, and when they drove up to the tavern were immediately surrounded by those who wish to be in the swell which a great man makes, even if he be a very little great man. And as Mr. Langstaff walked into the bar-room he was accosted by most of those present with a rough shake of the hand and the usual salutation of "all well at home?" Or, "how fares it?" No one ventured to say a word about the business in hand, to Mr. Langstaff personally; but little groups were gathered in separate knots around the room, and he would catch a word occasionally to let him understand that it was supposed he would be the purchaser. He had made up his mind to be so, and had in his pocket-book, as he had no doubt, more than sufficient to accomplish the feat.

And many with whom he did happen to talk on the subject were assured that he had come "with the stuff on hand," that "he was prepared for the worst"—"no telling what might happen," "when he had made up his mind for a thing he did not mean to be balked by a trifle."

Mr. Langstaff also took opportunity to let it be known that he was acting conscientiously and in a business way; "it was not in his heart to distress anybody—man woman or child; but right was right; a man could not always be kept out of his own—creditors can't always wait—money was scarce—but when would it be better? Who knows? I don't. Ups and downs will come—people must keep a look-out as they go along!"

And as Mr. Langstaff delivered himself of these wise sayings, he would turn his eye on one and another around the room, and give a nod with his head and receive a nod of approbation in return.

It was now drawing towards the hour appointed for the sale; the gig of Esquire Rice was seen coming at a distance, and the sheriff who always acted as auctioneer for the town was already on hand. He was a jovial, good hearted fellow, who had much rather help a man out of trouble, than into it, any day. Everybody liked Sheriff Culberston, and his presence always shed a cheer on every circle. And soon after Mr. Culberston entered, Charlie Thompson came in. Charlie was very warm from walking such a distance, and no doubt somewhat excited. Heedless of the gaping eyes that were fixed upon him, he being just then an object of the same kind of interest as a criminal on the way to the jail or the gallows, advanced at once to Mr. Langstaff, and taking off his hat, politely asked that gentleman if he would step with him into the adjoining room.

There was a mighty contrast in the appearance of the two individuals as they stood for a moment face to face. Charlie had a bright fair complexion, large dark blue eyes, light hair, curling whenever it could get a chance; an open broad forehead; full lips and remarkably handsome teeth, which were easily seen when he spoke. Although but sixteen, he was equal in height to Mr. Langstaff.

The latter, as Charlie spoke to him, put on his most sober severe Sunday aspect; he no doubt felt that it was necessary.

Mr. Langstaff was disturbed; he was at his wit's end—he could not imagine what the youth could want of him—in private, too! So he turned his eye towards a distant part of the room, but made no reply. At length, as Charlie stood respectfully awaiting his answer, he said in a rough tone—

"What do you want?"

"I wish to say a word to you, Mr. Langstaff; and you will confer a great favor on me to allow a few moments' interview in private."

All who were in the vicinity, and saw the earnestness of the boy, began to have their hearts warmed towards him; they could talk about the affairs of the family as indifferent matters, when the scene was removed from their immediate presence; but they all knew Charlie; they knew how tenderly he had been brought up, and they had seen how manfully he had borne reverse of fortune, and how he had labored for the support of his mother and sisters; and now when his fair young countenance was exposed to their view, bearing the marks of intense emotion, it was a reality that appealed at once to their better feelings.

Sheriff Culbertson stepped up to Mr. Langstaff as Charlie made the last appeal, and touched his arm.

"Go along; go along with the boy, and see what he wants."

But Mr. Langstaff was that morning a little too much under the power of his evil genius, and not having yielded at first willingly, his pride forbade that he should be influenced by others.

"My business, Mr. Culbertson, don't have any secrets; if anybody wants anything of me, here I am, ready to face it; business is business; I don't want no child's play!"

Charlie put on his hat, and walking towards the window, turned his back to it, and stood waiting, with a full heart, to see the end.

Mr. Langstaff had not gained by this operation; there was a buzz through the room, that he could not very well misinterpret; people spoke not loud, but with an earnestness, that showed how they felt.

The hour has at length arrived; "Squire Rice has come," was said by two or three different voices. Mr. Sheriff begins to take out his papers, and moves towards a corner of the

room, and a chair is placed for him, on which to stand, and near by is a small table, and the squire, without speaking to any one, takes a chair, and places it thereat, and sitting down, lays some paper before him, and commences writing.

The company forms a circle at a little distance.

"The clock has struck ten, Mr. Sheriff!" said Langstaff.

"I know that, sir, but she's too fast by ten minutes; no hurry, we want a full house; there may be many more on the way; who knows! we want the right kind of folks here to-day, if we can get them; it isn't often such a valuable piece of property goes under the hammer; no hurry, Mr. Langstaff."

The squire kept on writing; occasionally his eye would glance round the room, as though in search of some one, and then be fixed again on the paper.

At length the sheriff addresses him in a low voice.

"I suppose the time has fully arrived; shall we wait any longer?"

The squire takes out his watch, his eye is not on it; he is looking anxiously round the room; he is evidently disturbed; he lays his watch upon the table.

"It is ten o'clock precisely, lacking one minute; I suppose you may as well begin; I was in hopes" ——

"Expecting any bidders?"

"You may begin!"

Just as the sheriff mounted his chair, a carriage drove up, and "There's Mr. Vernon!" was whispered, near the door. In a moment more, that gentleman entered, accompanied by a tall young man, genteelly dressed. No one seemed to know him, although every eye was intently fixed that way. The two gentlemen did not advance but barely into the room, and seemed very unconcerned spectators of what was going on.

"Can you tell me," said Mr. Langstaff, stooping over, and whispering to the squire, "who that young man is, that has come in with Mr. Vernon?"

"Some friend of his, likely!"

There was not much satisfaction for Mr. Langstaff in this reply, and he would, no doubt, have put another question if the sheriff had not just then called the attention of the company to the business before them.

In a full, clear voice, he read a description of the property

offered for sale, and after some preliminary remarks, setting forth its value, he was about to begin, when an interruption was caused by Mr. Langstaff.

"You had better state that the sale is for cash on the nail!"

"Aye, aye, sir; I believe I have stated that, but I can repeat it. Gentlemen: this property is to be sold for cash on delivery of the deed. And now for a bid; your minds are made up, no doubt. It is a fine estate, and ought to command a great price. What do you say?"

There was a momentary pause, when Mr. Langstaff, in a full voice, called out—

"Four thousand one hundred dollars!

"Four thousand one hundred dollars; gentlemen, you hear that!"

"Four thousand three hundred dollars!"

Mr. Langstaff looked at the gentleman who made the bid; it was one of the creditors; it took him somewhat by surprise, but he called out again—

"Four thousand four hundred dollars!"

"Four thousand four hundred dollars. Gentlemen, only four thousand four hundred—four thousand four hundred—four thousand four—

"Six thousand dollars!"

Mr. Langstaff dropped a paper he had in his hand, and the color flew from his face; he did not look round; he heard the bid come from beyond the circle in which he was standing. Smiles were on every countenance; and all who conveniently could, fixed their eye on the young stranger.

"Six thousand dollars! did I understand you, sir?" said the auctioneer, looking earnestly at the bidder.

"Yes, sir, six thousand dollars; it is my bid, I believe!"

"It is, sir, and I thank you for it. Gentlemen, six thousand dollars is bid for this splendid property; not half its value yet Come, gentlemen, be lively. Mr. Langstaff, now is your chance; not half its value yet! Six thousand; six thousand; six thousand; six thousand; six thousand. Gentlemen, I am not going to wait; if any of you want this property for more than six thousand dollars, you must bid quick; it is cheap as dirt, and you all know it. Gentlemen, have you done? Going at six thousand dollars! All done? Going; going; gone!"

And his hands clapped together.

"What name, sir?"

"Mrs. Cornelia Thompson!"

The moment the name was announced, a clapping of hands was distinctly heard from a person near the auctioneer; it was by one of the creditors; and at once, as by an electric impulse, it ran through the assembly; then stamping, and to crown all, some outsiders gave a huzza, and all within joined in the chorus.

In the midst of the uproar, Charlie sprang from the station he had occupied, and passing through the crowd, came up to Esquire Rice:

"What does it mean, Mr. Rice?"

The gentleman put his hand on the shoulder of the youth, and whispered to him—

"It means, Charlie, that your mother's property is again in her own hands, and all debts paid!"

"But how? Who has done it? Tell me his name. Who is he?"

"He is a good friend; he will call upon your mother in a few moments; go home, and give the news!"

On his way out, Charles came close by the stranger; their eyes met; he put forth his hand, and it was grasped warmly; not a word was spoken; they gazed at each other an instant, and then Charles broke from the room, and went rapidly on his way.

At once, there was quite a crowd around Esquire Rice, inquiring—"Who is he? Who is he, Squire Rice?"

"A gentleman; a man, every inch of him!"

"But his name!"

"You all ought to know him. Do you not remember a lad who once lived here, by the name of Henry Thornton?"

"Little Henry Thornton!"

"He was little once; but he is no chicken now. But Mr. Langstaff can tell you all about him; ask him!"

Mr. Langstaff, however, did not wait to answer any questions; he was making his way out of the room, in a direction as far from the young stranger as possible, who was just then very busy shaking hands with old acquaintances.

Poor Mr. Langstaff did not find, that by getting into the next room, he had escaped difficulties. He was met as soon

as there by an officer of the town, who politely placed a paper in his hand, which Mr. Langstaff opened, and commenced to read. A few lines caused him to take a seat, and wipe the big drops from his forehead.

The officer did not wait, however, to receive an answer, but hastened to the bar-room, and handed to the squire a paper, similar to the one he had presented Mr. Langstaff.

"Esquire Rice, I am ordered by Judge Woodruff to hand you this paper. I have just given a copy to Mr. Langstaff."

The Esquire glanced at it, and began whistling a tune in a low strain.

"All right, sir—shall be attended to."

The officer having accomplished his task, mingled with the company, and it is very possible made no secret of the business he had been sent upon.

"There goes Langstaff!" said many voices, as he was seen to pass the tavern on his way home; "he cuts up the old horse pretty well—hurry to get home—brought up standing—good for him!"

As soon as Henry could get away from the hands which were constantly being held out to him, he said a few words to the esquire, and then followed Mr. Vernon to the carriage, which had been in waiting at the door.

"Drive to the Widow Thompson's."

We must now follow the impatient Charlie, on his way home. How long it took him to get there we cannot say, or whether he ran or walked, he never could tell himself. But the girls saw him as he entered the gate, he seemed almost exhausted—they ran down the steps to meet him.

"Dear Charlie, how heated you are! What is the matter?"

"Where's mother? Where's mother?"

She heard his voice, and sprang towards him.

"Oh mother—dear mother!" and he fell upon her neck.

"My dear, dear son! Bear up, bear up."

"Oh mother, it is too good! It is all yours again."

"Charlie, what do you mean?"

"It is all yours, bought in your name, and the debts all paid."

"Sit down, Charles—sit down; calm yourself!" He was weeping aloud.

"Who has done it, Charles? How has it come about? Tell me, my son? calm yourself—are you sure of what you say?"

"I am sure, mother; but who it is I cannot tell! He is a young man, tall, and very handsome. I have seen him before, I am sure I have; but where, I cannot tell. Esquire Rice told me he was a friend of ours, and that he would wait upon you soon, and that I must hasten and give you the news. Dear girls—oh, shall we not be happy!"

And Charlie put his arms around them both as they showered kisses upon him, and mingled their tears with his.

"There is Mr. Vernon's carriage," said Mrs. Thompson, as she looked from the window, where she stood weeping such tears of gladness, as a mother only can shed when children are rescued from distress and gloom.

"Then they have come!" said Charles; "yes, there he is—oh I must go and meet him." And breaking from his sisters, he hurried to meet and welcome the mysterious friend who had poured such a fullness of joy into their hearts.

"Charlie," said the young stranger, as they clasped hands, "have you quite forgotten me?"

"I have seen you, but when, or where, I cannot tell."

"Perhaps your mother can recognize one whom her kind heart, in days past, led her to sympathize with, and comfort."

Henry was just then ascending the steps, and giving his hand to Mrs. Thompson.

The lady looked at him a moment with an intense gaze.

"Oh, can it be! Yes, I am sure it is his smile! Henry, Henry, is it so?"

"I am Henry; the Henry you once took such kind notice of, and who has never forgotten how much he owes to you."

"My dear, dear boy!" and she kissed him as she would her own Charlie.

Henry was not made of very stern materials, and the tokens of the deed he had so happily accomplished were so manifest on every countenance then beaming upon him, that he was compelled to sit down and let his feelings have vent.

But we must leave to the imagination of the reader the filling up of the scene—the questions to be asked and an-

swered—not only in reference to the years which had intervened, but also as to the way in which Henry had become acquainted with the peculiar situation of their affairs. This last involved at once the name of their dear Emma—dearer than ever, because an exile from home, laboring among strangers, and Charlie at once was on his feet.

"Mother, I must go and see Emma! I must, mother, and take her the news. Oh, how she will feel! and perhaps she will come home with me."

"Allow me to put in a word," said Mr. Vernon, "in reference to that matter. A young gentleman, a very particular friend of Mr. Henry Thornton, and who came on with him, and I may say also, a very dear friend of mine, having, on his way here, become partially acquainted with Miss Emma, and learning how things were situated, having a very warm and generous heart, was anxious for some active part in this pleasing work He would gladly have shared his purse with Henry in accomplishing the noble deed, but not being permitted to do that, he begged the privilege, last evening, of going as an express with the tidings to Miss Emma, so that her fears might be quieted."

"Oh how kind!" exclaimed both mother and children.

"And I was going to say further" (Mr. Vernon never could say things fast), "that this young gentleman has also taken it into his head, that possibly Miss Emma might be persuaded to leave her school for a few days—it being such a particular occasion—and accompany him back; that she might have an opportunity to rejoice together with you all in her old home."

"And has he gone?" exclaimed Charlie, who was still on his feet, ready for a start.

"He has. After gaining the full consent of Henry and myself, he lost no time, but started off at a very brisk rate, just before sunset, and it would not surprise me to see them here at any moment."

As Mr. Vernon paused, there was a rush for the door and windows, each looking in the same direction. All except Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Vernon, between whom a conversation was kept up, in a tone of voice that indicated no particular desire on their part, to attract the attention of the rest; occasionally, however, the name of Marston could be heard,

and once Mr. Vernon asked Henry, in a very audible voice, "if he knew the exact age of his friend Evart?"

Mr. Vernon and Henry had made a special appointment to dine with Esquire Rice; they were therefore obliged to leave the pleasant circle, to keep watch by themselves for their expected guests.

It was not, however, until the middle of the afternoon that the alarm was given. They were all seated on the wide piazza, having almost forgotten for what purpose they had assembled there, so busily engaged were they in talking about the strange things which had already taken place, and of some that were in anticipation, when suddenly Charles seized his hat and ran towards the gate. He made no reply to their calls after him, until he reached the open road, and then he raised his hand.

"Charlie sees them, mother; I know he does! Oh, dear Emma!"

Very soon they could descry, through the thick foliage that inclosed them from the highway, an approaching vehicle, and then a handsome horse and gig drove up.

"Oh, it is Emma! She has got Charlie round the neck—see, dear mother! and do see, she has taken the gentleman's arm; how happy she seems to be! do let us go and meet them!"

Whether Evart felt that he was fully paid for riding express, as he entered the house, and witnessed the outpouring of their happy hearts, we will not pretend to say. He seemed to be perfectly satisfied, and to feel very much at home, and he and Charlie were soon walking together, arm in arm, and talking about family matters, like two brothers, and the two sisters and Miss Emma, on retiring that evening, allowed him the same privilege they did Charlie—a kiss for good night—and he is to occupy a room with Henry there, while they stay. And Emma has found another young lady to take her place at the school—she does not go back; and many things are daily taking place, not worth while recording perhaps, which make it manifest that they are all very happy; the dark cloud has spent its fury, and sunshine and gladness are upon them.

It was three days after the events just recorded, that Henry made a call at the office of Esquire Rice.

The gentleman was as busy as ever, and received Henry very much after the manner of their first interview. The conversation, however, this time was commenced by the Squire, and it related principally to the sale, and the happy result of the whole affair. Very soon he spread out some papers upon the table, and requested Mr. Thornton to draw up and give his attention for a moment.

"There, Mr. Thornton, is a mortgage deed from Mrs. Thompson, covering the amount you have so promptly advanced. It is signed and sealed, and I believe you will find it correct."

"This is quite superfluous, Esquire Rice; I expected nothing of this kind; I should prefer not to take it."

The squire settled himself back in his chair, and looking keenly at Henry—

"That is all very well, Mr. Thornton; very generous in you, no doubt; but there are two sides to this question, as there are to almost all others. In the first place, the family will feel much better satisfied to have it so; the property is large, and enough can be sold from it in time, and that not very distant, to liquidate the claim, and leave them enough for all practical purposes. Charlie is young, very ambitious and resolute; it will be the making of him to have such a stimulus to exertion as this will entail. He can make sales of wood and land, too, as he finds opportunities, and will no doubt accomplish the thing; and, when once done, it will be worth a fortune to him in experience and in the confidence it will give him for the future. In the meantime, they will feel perfectly secure to have the claim against them in your hands.

"In the second place, Mr. Thornton, although for a young man you have done well for yourself, yet Mr. Vernon tells me, that the amount you have expended takes one-half of what you are worth. I know your prospects are good, and that you are connected, or soon to be, with an old and well established house; but prospects are one thing and property in hand is quite another thing, Mr. Thornton; take the word of one who has considerable experience in such matters.

"You have done a noble deed, and accomplished a mighty good for that family; you ought to be thankful that by a mysterious hand you was led into this matter just as you were.

Why, sir, when Mr. Vernon told me, the day you first called here, what was the purport of your errand, you seemed to me just as truly an angel of God as any of those messengers who, in old times, were sent to the Patriarchs in any of their troubles. I had given up all hope for the family, help was not to be had; Mr. Vernon had been away, and knew nothing about the thing until you told him, and even he could not in time have raised the means. It is the most perplexing time for money that has been in my day. No, sir, there is no doubt but for your interference Mr. Langstaff would be this day the owner of that estate, and the furniture selling to pay the other creditors.

Take my advice, sir; be content with what you have done, and thankful that you had the ability and the heart to do it."

"I shall not put it on record, Mr. Rice."

"Just as you please about that; there is no danger now that all claims are satisfied. And now we have done with that, let us allude to your business with Mr. Langstaff. He is in a peck of troubles; he is on a sick-bed, and, I think, is very unwell. The fact is, sir, 'he has sown to the wind, and is about to reap the whirlwind!'"

"I have no desire to distress him, sir; all I have wished was, to have justice done to my mother's memory. It ought to be known that she was no burden to him, and that his penuriousness brought her to the grave!"

"That is pretty well known already, sir; he is now threatened with prosecutions by those who have purchased the property; they find that their titles are good for nothing. But, sir, besides all this, he has domestic troubles which probably have done more than anything else to disturb his mind, and from what I can learn, have laid him on his back. It seems that his eldest son has been for some time engaged to be married, and it had been concluded between the father and his son that, as soon as he got possession of the Thompson estate, the old place was to have been resigned to the two boys, the elder brother to marry and keep house, and the old man, with his present wife and her two children, to remove to the new establishment.

"As you know, he was disappointed there; and so sure were they all that the prize was their own, that this elder son, unbeknown to any of the family, took it into his head to an-

ticipate matters a little, and was married the evening before the day of sale, and when he found out how things had gone, that very day brought his wife home. This, of course, was like a bomb thrown into a magazine; an explosion took place that has put things into a sad state of confusion; it is altogether a 'bad kettle of fish.' This son's wife is a vixen, and the present Mrs. Langstaff has a high temper, and full proud enough for their circumstances, and when the two ladies came together, and the whole of the case was comprehended, there was a blaze in less than no time; and when the old man tried to smooth things over, his wife and children both turned upon him, and, as he has been for the last two years troubled with a heart disease, the excitement brought on a violent attack, which had well-nigh put an end to him.

"The upshot of the matter is, that his wife has taken her two children and what furniture belonged to her, and gone to live with her relatives, and says his children may take care of him, and the children are not disposed to put themselves out in waiting upon him, and he has to depend upon the kindness of neighbors. He is verily in a bad case; but, strange to say, he seems a very different man from what he was a few days since. I have seen him this morning; he is not only ready to make all the reparation to you in his power, but seems to feel really anxious to do so, and has expressed to me a wish that when the thing is settled, he might see you, in order to ask your forgiveness."

"Would there be any difficulty in my going there to see him?"

"Do you think it best to go there?"

"I do, sir; it will no doubt be very unpleasant. I had hoped never to be compelled again even to behold a place so associated with what is painful in my past life, but I shall not feel satisfied now without seeing him."

"Then, if you have no objections, I will accompany you; my presence may not only insure you against uncivil treatment from his children, but, without it, you may not be permitted even to see him."

As Henry gladly accepted the proposal of Mr. Rice, both gentlemen repaired thither.

But little change had taken place in the external appear-

ance of things about the house. To Henry it presented the same dull, naked aspect as when he left it.

Their knock at the door was not answered for some time, and then not until a young woman had been seen by them reconnoitering from a corner of the building. The door was at length opened, and the same female they had seen stood before them holding the knob in one hand, and apparently dubious as to the propriety of admitting them. Her countenance was not an agreeable one, either because of its natural coarseness of feature or some disturbing elements at work within her mind. The squire did not wait to be invited in; he merely said to the lady, "Good morning, madam," and then stepped within the entry, saying to Henry—"Mr. Thornton, I will show you the way into Mr. Langstaff's room."

As Henry bowed to the lady on passing her, he received rather a severe look, and, as he ascended the stairs, he heard his own name mentioned in no very respectful terms, to some one she called "Jim."

Esquire Rice led the way into the very room where Henry took his last leave of his mother, and on the very bed where she expired lay the wretched man, who had then sat so unconcernedly by her side, apparently now himself about to contend with the last enemy.

There was no time for indulging sad reflections, nor was one revengeful thought harbored by the young man; he was the first to speak.

"I am truly sorry, sir, to see you thus."

There was no immediate reply, only Henry felt his hand pressed more tightly. In a little while the difficulty of breathing was somewhat relieved, and Mr. Langstaff, in a very feeble, broken voice, expressed his satisfaction that Henry had come; "he had much to say to him," but first—

"I wish to ask forgiveness for the past. I know"——

"Please, sir, let not a word more be said on that subject. I am here, Mr. Langstaff, for the purpose of doing what I can to relieve your mind from any trouble that may have been caused by my act. I wish to have the past buried in oblivion. I wish you, sir, to look upon me as a friend who means to stand by you in your distress, and even to wait upon you in your sickness. Rest assured, sir, I am in earnest; I have

learned too well the evil there is in my own heart. We are all sinners before God; of him we all need forgiveness. You will please me, sir, if you will not say one word more of all that has transpired hitherto. So far as property is concerned, I have no need; and my wish is that Mr. Rice should settle all matters between you and him, without any reference to me; and I will give a full release to you of all claim I might possibly have; and thus let our business matters be at once ended. And now, sir, tell me in what way I can be of any help to you."

"Sit down, sit down; this is a very unexpected meeting. What you have said is very kind. As to the property, I leave everything with Esquire Rice; I shall give him power to act when I am gone. Property, as I feel now, is of little account in comparison with other things; I speak now in reference to those who will be left behind me. I have made a great mistake; I have trained my children wrong—all wrong; my example has not been of the right kind—I see it now. The world has had my heart, and now the world is spoiled to me; I have no more desire to mingle again with its affairs; my very many sins, may God forgive."

Henry felt deeply for the poor sufferer; his haggard look, caused by the intense agony he suffered from the disturbance of his heart, and the feelings which he had expressed, all formed a picture of gloom and misery such as he had never looked upon before. And he learned a lesson which he hoped to carry with him through life.

As Henry gave his hand to say farewell, Mr. Langstaff grasped it tightly.

"If things had only been different; but it is too late now. I have heard of your noble conduct; you have begun right; may your whole life be a blessing; mine has been"——

But the thoughts he was about to express were too full of misery in his present state of excitement to allow of their utterance.

"God is merciful, my dear sir, try to leave yourself in his hands. He is very merciful."

And thus they parted.

It was a beautiful day in the month of June, and as Henry had now relieved his mind from all unpleasant matters, he resolved to visit some of the retired spots to which he had

formerly resorted, and especially one where he had often been in company with Louise; where he had assisted her in managing her pole and line, and disentangled the little hooks from the overhanging branches, and from the hidden stumps and obstructions to which they were constantly catching.

It was not far from the dwelling, and on a brook which ran through part of the estate of Mrs. Thompson, a gentle eminence screened it both from the house and the public road. Yellow willows encircled a cove into which the waters of the brook spread out and formed quite a little pond, deep enough for sunfish and kindred species to make it a resort.

Seats had been fixed there by Henry, and the underbrush cleared out, and the stray limbs and twigs picked up, and it became a very favorite spot with the children of the family. Henry had been their chief gallant whenever on Saturday afternoons they wished to "go a-fishing." Its attraction to him now was because of its connection with the past.

After parting from Esquire Rice, in whose conveyance he had been carried to Mr. Langstaff's, and brought back as far as the commencement of the Thompson farm, Henry crossed some fields with which he was familiar, then through a small clump of woods; and there meeting the brook alluded to, followed its windings to the spot he had in view. At length he mounts a fence—the old stone fence, now a little out of repair, and he is at the place.

The willows have lost some of their brilliancy, at least about the trunks, the bark is rougher than it was, and the branches are not now in the way of hook or line, they are lifted far above the water.

One of the seats still remains, but to Henry it appears much rougher than formerly, rather a rude construction, he thinks, for young ladies to rest upon. The pond looked now like a very small concern indeed, perhaps because the trees had grown so that their shadows now cover the whole surface. Formerly Louise and he had often watched their outlines on the still water, not far from where they sat, and made ripples on purpose with their lines in order to see the shadows dance, and then gradually sink to rest. Henry remembered all this well.

Awhile he stands and surveys this little foot-fall of the past, and then, somewhat wearied by his walk, seats himself upon

the bench and with his hat beside him and his head leaning against a willow, gave a loose rein to memory, and revelled amid the scenes in which the boy Henry had an active part. Woods and ravines, and blackberry fields, and strawberry patches, and walnut trees, and stone fences, and cedar groves, and creeks, and boats, all passed in review, some of them of more interest than others, but all linking to one who had in spite of opposing obstacles become deeply rooted in his heart. And so absorbed was he by his tramp of memory that he was quite unconscious of approaching footsteps.

They were not noisy steps indeed, merely the gentle tread of a female. She walked slowly, gracefully along; she was coming by the path that led thither from the house. Her hat was hanging on her arm, her dark locks unconfined, swayed with the motion of her head as she stooped or moved to either side to avoid the overhanging limbs.

She too must have been lost in thought, or perhaps the shrubs and branches hindered her view, for when she stopped and gazed upon Henry, a few feet only intervened between them.

"Enjoying all alone your generous thoughts?"

"My dear Louise!"

Henry had started to his feet at the sound of a voice so familiar, but utterly unexpected; and as he took her offered hand, a deep blush suffused his countenance; he had evidently spoken without reflection. And perhaps Louise, for it was she, was not quite prepared to be thus addressed by him, for she too had more color than would naturally have been caused by the very moderate pace at which she had been walking.

It would have been in the common course of things, if Henry had asked, "where she had come from?" or, "that her arrival was very unexpected;" but he did not—he uttered only these three words above recorded, and then, confounded by his blunder, could think of nothing but what he should say in apology.

"You *will* pardon me; indeed I was very much taken by surprise; for the time, too, I was completely lost in reviewing former days, and"——

"Oh, Henry, you need make no apology; if you spoke words which did not convey the meaning of your heart, it

must have been by accident, and I can overlook it; but if not, I hope you are not ashamed to have your feelings known, at least to me; I have never trifled with them, Henry."

"Never—no never!"

"And I have never tried to conceal from you the fact, that I cared for you."

No, you never have; I thank you a thousand times for it—for all your generous treatment of me."

"I might have taken exception to your somewhat constrained and distant manner towards me of late, but I can now account for that, and perhaps I might have been spared some tears; but that is past. All I ask now is, am I as you have just said, 'Your dear Louise?'"

"Dearer than I can find words to express—and ever have been."

"Here, Henry"—and Louise took from her breast a locket, fastened by a golden chain around her neck; she touched a little spring, and one of its golden lids flew open—"read that."

"Mizpah! Oh, have you kept that for so long a time?"

"Yes, and that little word has been a talisman to me more rich with healing virtue than all that eastern fable ever told. That word has been repeated morning and night, and when I thought of you.

"At length, when widely separated, it became for you and me a prayer; and thus I learned the way to ask for what I needed, and from that, to search His holy book who answers prayer, until my heart yielded up its confidence and trust, and on His forgiving love could lean and find repose."

Henry was too much overcome to make immediate reply, but, holding still her hand, gazed at her beautiful countenance as she looked up to him with all a woman's trustful love beaming from it. At length he spoke.

"Louise, you do not doubt my true and faithful love?"

"I do not, and I never will. And now, dear Henry, in the presence of Him who is my witness for the past and my hope for all the future, I commit myself, and all I have and am, to you."

"Dear, dear Louise!"

"And I do it without one shade of doubt, without one thought but, as you ever proved yourself, you will be *true to the last.*"

Henry, as some fond lovers would, might then have clasped her to his breast, and poured out words burning with affection. But not so did he receive this richest gift of heaven. His eye was raised above, his hand was clasped to hers, and, as with covered face she poured forth silent tears, he asked, "That what had then been done on earth might be ratified in heaven; that now and all their journey through, one heart, one hope, one joy and sorrow, might be theirs; that true and faithful love might bless them with its hallowed power until they slept in death, and in a better world unite with all who had been washed in the redeeming blood of Christ."

On their way to the house, the mystery was cleared up how she came so unexpectedly upon him. "She had come on with her father, at her own solicitation, to visit her old friends, for, after she learned the errand upon which Henry had gone, she felt that it belonged rather to her than him to interpose for their relief; but she had been told since, that even her aid would have been too late, that Henry's prompt action had anticipated the evil and her generous designs.

"She had learned through Evart, too, some things which threw light upon Henry's cool deportment towards her; and had resolved that, when they met again, all doubts and fears between him and her should be at once and forever removed."

It was not a long walk to the house, but they did not hasten their steps, and ere they reached the garden gate, her story had been told.

"And your father is here?"

"He is, and can do nothing but talk about that boy Henry, as he calls you still; and has been telling Aunt Thompson all the story of your first meeting, and many more things which he has learned, I know not where or how. And not caring to hear more about you than I already knew, I thought to go alone and see our old sporting ground, and recall past days."

"And, may I hope your father will approve what we have done?"

"I think you may; but we will go to him at once, and you must tell him all; and we will ask his blessing. But there is Evart, and he has got his Emma with him—how

happy they appear! Evart has found at last a treasure which he may well prize above all his wealth."

As the friends approached each other, the secret between Henry and Louise was at once revealed. They were too happy not to show by every look and act what had taken place.

"My dear Louise."

"My dear Emma."

"We are very happy," said Louise; "may each of us as we ought prize the mercies of heaven."

Henry and Evart clasped hands in silence; words could not utter what their hearts then tasted of true bliss.

"Where is my father? can you tell me, Emma?"

"We left him seated in the room with mother, talking about Henry," said Emma, smiling through her tears; and then on Evart's arm she leaned, and they pursued their walk, while Henry and Louise went into the house.

"Do not leave the room, aunt." Mrs. Thompson, as they entered, was rising to depart. "Do not go, aunt; henceforth you are to be linked with us in every interest—our relative and friend."

It was not much that Henry had to say, nor was there need for many words, for Captain Marston had loved too well himself not to sympathize with their young hearts.

He arose and took Henry by one hand, and with the other gently embraced his dear Louise.

"Yes, Henry, with all my heart; she is no common prize, but with her personal worth and warm affections, and all her earthly possessions, I would rather intrust her to you than any other I have ever known. I feel, too, that we shall not lose a daughter while we gain a son!"

And now for a ride to Maple Cove. Evart and Henry were more desirous than ever to revisit a spot so dear to them from past associations, and Emma and Louise were equally anxious to have one more view of the place where they took their first excursion on the water, and became so strangely acquainted with him who had been the means of bringing about such happy results to them both.

We must leave to the imaginations of our readers the pleasant ride, on that pleasant June morning. Nature was in all her rich attire; and their hearts fully in tune to enjoy her

beauties. Such rides are not so unfrequent as the croakers of life would have us believe—they are oases in our long travel upon which memory delights to dwell, even to the very end of our journey.

As they drove up to the door of Mrs. Malcolm's residence, the old lady laid down her knitting, for she was busily engaged in that old fashioned avocation, seated on their long stoop, no doubt enjoying its pleasant shade with the fresh breeze around her, and the sound of the old dam regaling her ears.

A moment she sat looking at the young folks, and trying to make out who they were, that seemed so happy and smiled so pleasantly upon her. But giving that up, she arose and came to meet the ladies as they ascended the stoop.

"You have forgotten us, Mrs. Malcolm—but we should have known you if we had met you a hundred miles from here. You have not altered in the least." As Louise said this, she was giving her hand to the lady, who pressed it as heartily as though she did recognize the pretty graceful being who smiled so sweetly, and whose voice was so musical.

"I don't know, but I shall think who you are after a while; but, for the life of me, I can't tell your names now!"

"Oh! well, Mrs. Malcolm," said Emma; "perhaps you well remember stuffing two hungry girls about six or seven years ago, with pie, and cake, and sweetmilk, and all kinds of good things—they had run away with Mr. Malcolm's boat, and had like to have been carried off to the Sound!"

"Oh, do, la me! It ain't though! Can you be the same?"

"The same, Mrs. Malcolm. Only we have grown a little taller, and I hope a little wiser than we were then; but we have not forgotten you!"

"Oh! dear, dear, dear! what changes a few years makes in young people! But come in, darlings, and take seats—and let me hear about you. Oh, yes, I remember now; and many a time does Mr. Malcolm talk about you, and how frightened he was—and about that smart boy. But can you tell anything about him. We aint heard a word since he left us!"

"You see the tallest of those two gentlemen who are walking down to the mill—that is the very boy, Mrs. Malcolm!"

"Of all things! you don't say! And has he done well? We have thought a deal about him!"

"He has done nobly, Mrs. Malcolm; but you must make him tell you his own story—it will be worth hearing!"

"Oh! well, if he has turned out as we hoped he would, that is enough. So many get ruined going to the city. I know I had a good crying spell after he was gone.

"When I see him go off up the hill, with his little baggage in his hand, and knowing that he was a very tender-hearted boy, and had no friends to help him, and was going to find his own way through the world—I tell you I did cry heartily. But, oh dear! to think how we are taken care of, young and old! And now take off your bonnets, and maybe I can find a little ginger-bread or something—some bread and butter at the least—but won't the gentlemen come in?"

"They are coming, Mrs. Malcolm, and your husband with them."

In a few moments the gentlemen entered—Mr. Malcolm wiping his forehead and his eyes occasionally.

"I would not have believed it," said Mrs. Malcolm; taking Henry's hand with both of hers. "I never should have thought of you being Henry Thornton, if that young lady had not pointed you out."

And now, dear reader, we have come to the spot from whence we started—it has been something of a round-about journey, but to the author, a most agreeable one. He has been at times, by some friendly critics, charged with being too minute in delineation—a charge to which he must doubtless plead guilty. He will, however, leave some things at the close of this present work for the imagination of the reader to fill up. There are some happy weddings to be attended. Some agreeable residences to be erected, here at Maple Cove—there are new families to be established—there are a great many pleasant calls to be made at Mrs. Malcolm's of summer afternoons—where pie, and cake, and beer, and all sorts of nice things are to be enjoyed. And you need not fear making too lovely a picture of some of these places or scenes—for when the heart has been brought into obedience to God, and enjoys his presence, there is much of Paradise and its rich delights yet to be experienced, amid the desolations of sin. There are beauties yet on earth for the eye and the heart.

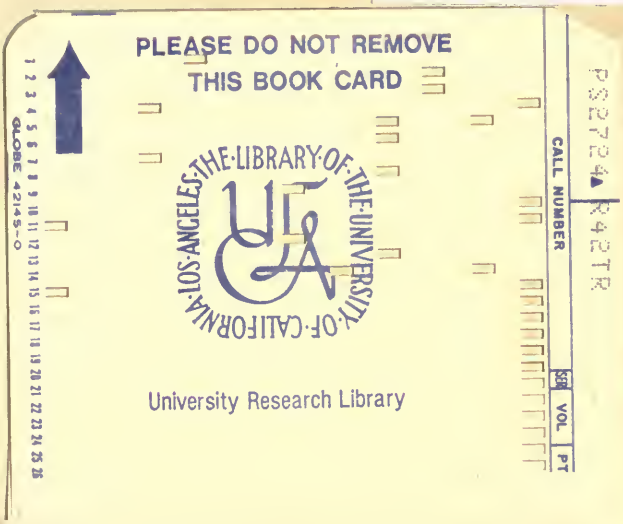
THE END.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9—Series 4939

UCLA-Young Research Library
PS2724 .R42tr
yr
L 009 589 205 5

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 001 224 414 1